CHATTERBOX

1876.

TOO HOT.

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Chatterbox

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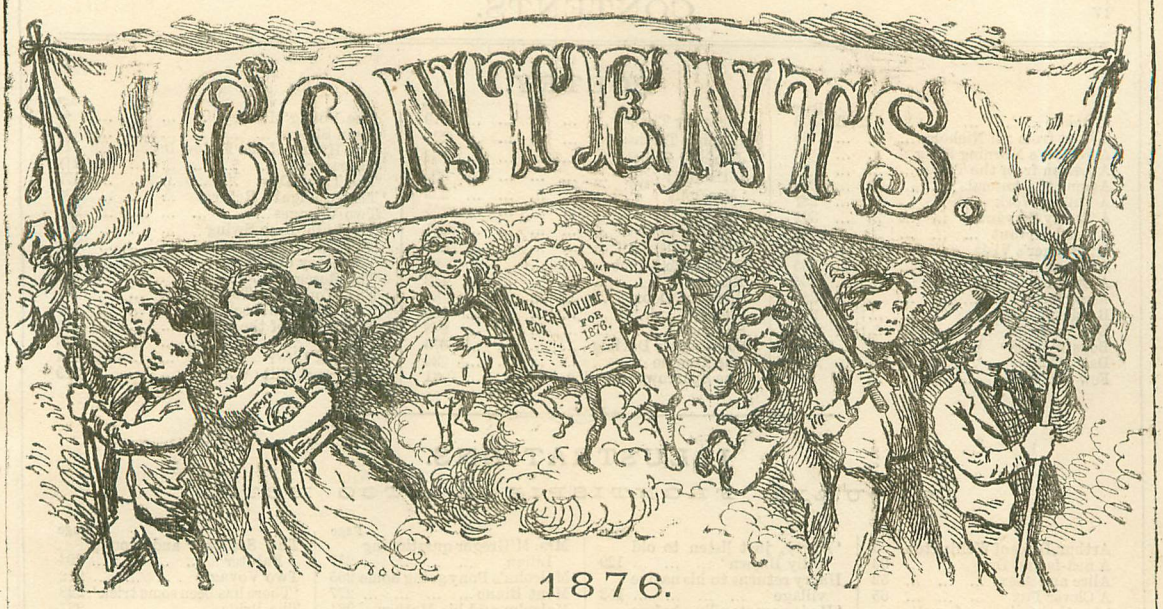

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No. 1. Dec. 2, 1875. *Weekly—One Halfpenny.*

Chatterbox.

The Mastiff. By HARRISON WEIR.

STORY OF A MASTIFF.

WHEN Charles VI., surnamed the Well-Beloved, the son of Charles the Wise, sat on the throne of France, between the years A.D. 1380 and 1422—and when great disasters arose through his unhappy insanity and the intrigues of his bad wife and selfish nobles, and about the time when the great battle of Agincourt was fought—there lived in Paris two men, named Aubrey de Montdidier and Macaire.

I am sorry to say they hated each other most bitterly, and they made no secret of their mutual dislike. All their neighbours knew it, and the flames of hatred rose to such a height that Macaire sought to ease his mind by murdering Aubrey in the deep and lonely forest of Bondi, which is not far from Paris. Aubrey was attacked and slain, a grave was dug, and his body carefully hidden; and Macaire did it all alone. No one shared his guilty labours—no woodman or traveller had seen the deed. Macaire had now no enemy in his way—no scornful looks and words to bear, no hard taunts to digest; but there is no peace for the wicked, and murder will out, they say. One eye, besides the eye of God, had seen the dark, foul deed, and the blood which reddened the hands of Macaire, and the turf in the green wood. It was the eye of Aubrey's faithful dog. He had seen the whole transaction; but, through sagacity, or timidity, or Divine influence, he did not interfere on his master's behalf; he did not seem to take any notice, but, crouching in a thicket hard by, he watched the murderer, and when the grave had been covered in, and Macaire had left his terrible secret behind him, the mastiff came and stretched himself upon the mould that covered his dear master, and there he lived for days and days. Hunger alone compelled him to leave the spot from time to time. Sometimes, indeed, he found food near at hand; but generally he ran to the city for it, and oftenest to the house where the bosom-friend of Aubrey lived. The poor, lean dog came scratching and whining at the door. It was opened, and they said, 'Here is Montdidier's dog again!' Nothing, however, could tempt the dog to stay. When his hunger was appeased away he went. He suffered the greatest distress if they tried to stop him. Immediately the door was opened he fled from them like the wind. Now this happening many times, the curiosity of Aubrey's friend was greatly excited, and he hoped it might lead to the discovery of the missing man, whose disappearance had given the greatest anxiety to his friends. One day, when the dog came as usual for food, Aubrey's friend contrived to follow him out of the city and into the forest of Bondi. The dog led him to a spot where the earth had been disturbed, and immediately began in a great haste to scratch, as dogs do when after a rat or rabbit. In a little while the remains of Aubrey de Montdidier were seen. Of course steps were at once taken to have the body decently buried, and Justice made inquiry into the crime, but without result. The mastiff now no longer dwelt in the forest, but attached himself closely to his old master's friend. One day he was following his new master in the streets, when by chance they met Macaire. Immediately the dog began to howl, the hair of his neck became stiff and bristling, and had not his master interfered, Macaire would have been worried. The same dislike was shown whenever the dog caught sight of Macaire; toward every one else he was mild and good-tempered. It was well known what deadly enemies Aubrey and Macaire had been, and this fact, coupled with the dog's ill-will, laid Macaire under the gravest suspicions. He was arrested, and it was decreed that he should fight the mastiff, it being then the custom for one suspected of murder to fight the murdered man's champion. Those who have read Scott's *Fair Maid of Perth* will remember how Hal of the Wynd, the stout armourer, fought Bonthron, the murderer of Oliver Proudfute the bonnet-maker. So Macaire and the mastiff met and fought. The man had a staff and a shield, and the dog had a tub to retreat into when he was tired. The battle took place at Paris, in the Isle of Our Lady, and tens of thousands gathered to the sight. The struggle was long and severe, but Justice prevailed. Macaire fainted away through fatigue, and when his eyes opened he confessed the crime. Thus the noble dog of Montargis helped Justice in her labours, and taught us, among other lessons, that God can punish evil-doers in a way they know not, and often when they think their villany is hidden for ever.

G. S. O.

HALT!

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTMAS EVE at school! Could anything be more dreary? As I stood drumming with my fingers on the school-room window, where the frost had drawn all sorts of queer sea-weed patterns, my eyes were pricking and smarting with something that was not the cold, and my heart felt very heavy and frozen; for it did not seem a bit like Christmas, and it almost looked as if mother must have forgotten Bertie and me. It had been bad enough the day before, when all the boys except us had gone off to their homes. Such a noise and jolly racket as there always is before the holidays! Such a packing of boxes and scampering up and down stairs! Such a shouting from school-room to dormitory, and from dormitory back to school-room! And then there is the sliding down the banisters! We always do that on breaking-up day, and no one takes any notice or says a word against it, though on any other day in the term you would get forty lines if you were caught at it. But on breaking-up day every one does it, and the banisters get such a polishing as they don't lose

in a hurry. I suppose the Doctor thinks the boys are too happy to break their necks, or perhaps he is too busy to take any notice. And then come the two great omnibuses, piled up inside and out with a mass of luggage and struggling boys. Then the Doctor comes out very smiling and good-natured, and wishes every one a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, and then goes on to say something unpleasant, and to remind us of the very thing we wish to forget; which is, that he hopes to see his young friends again on the 25th: but we always stop this by beginning 'Three cheers for the Doctor!' And then come cracking of whips and banging of doors, and dull old Highmore is left behind, and we are on our way home. But oh! what a difference it makes when one is not in the jolly crew on the omnibus, but is left behind in dull old Highmore, as Bertie and I were! When the last omnibus disappeared round the corner, and the last shouts died away, it did seem lonely at Highmore, indeed; the house seemed so large and we seemed so small, and our voices sounded so loud, and everything we did or said echoed all over the house.

But I have not told you how it was that Bertie and I were left behind at school that Christmas, when all the other boys were going home. Just a week before Christmas, father heard that grandfather was very ill in the south of France, and not likely to live many days, so father and mother set off all in a hurry to go to him, and took our little sister Edie with them. But though they were in such a hurry, mother found time to write to us, saying how sorry she was for our disappointment, but we must bear it as well as we could, and she would make some arrangement for our holidays which she thought we should like, but she would let us know about this in good time. However, a week had gone by and we had heard nothing of what we were to do, and the breaking-up day came, and, as I have said, all the boys went away and we were left behind. When the next morning came and brought the letter-bag, and when the Doctor opened it in the hall and looked at the letters one after another, and then said 'Nothing for you, boys,' you can fancy how we felt. I think the Doctor was disappointed, too, for I fancy that he is as glad to get rid of all of us boys as we are to go, and that the holidays are nearly as pleasant to him as they are to us. He saw we were rather down; so after a bit he said, 'I am afraid it is a great disappointment to you, my boys, but we will see if we can't make it pleasant although it is school. You must try and forget where you are, and think that you have come to spend Christmas with me. I am obliged to go out to-day with Mr. May and the children, but this evening we will try and be more sociable. So amuse yourselves as well as you can to-day, and we will see what can be done.'

And then he went away, and we saw him drive off in the waggonette with Mr. May and his two little girls, so jolly and laughing, and Bertie and I were left alone in the great empty school-room. We had not the heart to do anything, not even to go out to the pond, and I stood ever so long at the window playing tunes on the glass, while Bertie sat by the fire, pretending to read. I do not know how long I had been standing there when there was a ring at the bell, but I took no notice, for I fancied that it was the Doctor come back for something, and I could not see the front door from the school-room window. I took no notice either when the school-room door opened, for the servant had been coming in and out all the morning, but when I heard Bertie give a cry and jump up from his stool by the fire, I turned round, and what do you think I saw? There was our old friend, Colonel Morris, standing by the door!

I ought to tell you who Colonel Morris is, or else you will not know how I felt when I saw him there. He was an old friend of ours who lived at Silverhill, and had been very kind to Bertie and me when we were stopping down at Oatlands Farm. I do not know what else to tell you about him, except that he was a regular brick, and that there was no one in the world we would rather have seen then except father and mother.

'Hullo!' he said (Bertie had got hold of one of his hands and I of his other arm), 'you don't seem very lively here. Don't you find Highmore very jolly in the holidays?'

'Jolly!' I said: 'it's miserable!'

'But it will be all right now,' said Bertie; 'now you've come. You are not going away just yet?'

'Not going away?' answered the Colonel, pulling out his watch. 'Indeed I am, and I have not much time to lose either if I mean to catch the train. I came up in a fly, and it is waiting to take me back. I only just came in to see how you were enjoying yourselves, and now I think I must be going, and wish you good-bye.'

I knew he was only joking, and that it was all right, but Bertie's face grew so long that the Colonel made haste to clear up the matter.

'Well, Bertie, my boy, I was going to ask you and Tom to come with me and spend Christmas at the Hermitage, if you could tear yourselves away from here: but of course, if you find it so very jolly, I shall have to go back alone. I met the Doctor down in Saltby, and showed him your father's letter, and he gave me leave to carry you off. Now then, quick, march! Off with you to make ready, for we have no time to lose.'

That was a jolly journey, though it was so cold and long; we were too happy to be cold, and the whole day seemed shorter than the half-hour after the post came in the morning. We got up to London as it was getting dusk, and the lamps were lighted in the streets, and the shops all looked so bright and gay, and the crowds in the streets all seemed so busy and good-tempered, as we drove quickly by on our way to the Paddington Station. There was such a crowd at the station, too; all the trains late, and every one in a hurry to get off; such piles of luggage, too! every moment you heard 'By your leave!' and had to scramble out of the way of trucks piled up far above the porter's head. Yet every one seemed good-tempered, and not to mind the waiting and jostling; and every one was ready to lend a hand with the luggage, or hold a band-box or a baby; and strangers wished each other 'A merry Christmas and a happy New Year,' as if they had been old friends. One old country-woman with a great basket of rosy apples picked out the two largest and rosiest, and gave one to me and one to Bertie, saying, 'There's a present for you, my dears,

"There was our old friend Colonel Morris."

for the sake of Christmas-time.' I hardly liked to take the apple, as it seemed as if we were babies; and she called us 'my dears,' too! but the Colonel nodded to us to take them, and we wished her a merry Christmas and thanked her; and the Colonel told us that a little thing kindly given should always be kindly taken, more especially at Christmas-time.

'I wonder why people are so good-tempered,' said I, 'at Christmas!'

'Peace and good-will,' said the Colonel; 'don't you remember?'

'And people give presents to one another so!' I went on.

'That is because they had such a great **Present** given to them at Christmas,' said the Colonel.

And I heard Bertie say softly, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only Son.'

(To be continued.)

Arthur, Duke of Wellington.

THE GREAT DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

ARTHUR WELLESLEY was born April 30, 1769, in Grafton Street, Dublin. He was the son of the Earl and Countess of Mornington. They were comparatively poor; the family-house — Dargan Castle, County Meath — was in ruins. This castle was the home of Arthur Wellesley's childhood. Arthur's four brothers and himself were educated at Eton.

When he was only eighteen years of age, he received his first commission in the army as ensign in the 73rd Regiment, and was very soon promoted to a troop in the 18th Light Dragoons. It was the time when the French Revolution was raging, and the Republican armies of France had nearly half a million of soldiers.

The English army, under the Earl of Moira, was preparing to land on the coast of Brittany, in France. Lieutenant Wellesley was anxious to meet the enemy in the field, and that, too, in command of his battalion, but being sadly hampered by debts he could not leave the country till his creditors were paid. This was done through the kind influence of a Mr. Dillon, who had large dealings with the young officer; he accepted the trust, and all the creditors were paid. The same honourable feeling marked the Duke throughout his life. By rigid personal economy he paid off his debts, and became afterwards the possessor of a princely income. His name and credit alone were enough to procure all the necessaries to support an army in the field when his military chest was almost left without a guinea.

In April, 1793, he was made a Major, and in September of the same year, Lieut.-Colonel. In 1794 he embarked at Cork, in command of the 33rd Regiment, to join the Duke of York's army in the Netherlands: and in April of 1796 his regiment was ordered to India. When there, his brother, the Marquis Wellesley, was Governor-General; this was doubtless a help to him in his new field of duty, and he fulfilled all the expectations formed of him by the way he administered the conquered provinces.

From 1796 to 1805, when he embarked for Europe, he had conducted a series of battles, in which, at all times, the British arms were victorious, and the old country was well represented in his person.

In 1807 he was appointed Secretary for Ireland under the Duke of Richmond, the Viceroy, with the understanding that it was not to interfere with his military duties. He was appointed to command the expedition against Copenhagen: he arranged the capitulation of the same, and received the thanks of Parliament.

In 1808 he sailed for Corunna and Oporto; landed in Portugal, and in August quickly succeeded the battles of Obidos, Roleia, and Vimiero.

In 1809 he received the thanks of Parliament for the latter victory. This year he received, also, the chief command in Portugal. On the 12th May was the passage of the Douro and the battle of Oporto. In August he was created a peer of the realm, under the title Baron Douro. In 1810 he followed the retreat of the French army under Marshal Massena to Santarem.

The next year victories followed in quick succession, including the battles of Fuentes d'Onoro, Albuera, with the taking of Badajos. The taking of this fort (or place of defence) was considered without an equal in the history of sieges. On the day the fort was taken it contained 4742 men; 1200 of them were made helpless by wounds during the fighting, and 3500 were taken prisoners by the English soldiers under Wellington.

This great victory was so quickly followed by others, that to read about them is like reading a terrible story of romance. Wellington, the conqueror, returned home to England, had the large sum of 400,000*l.* voted to him by Parliament, and was made a Marquis. Quickly afterwards followed victories over the French in the battles of Quatre Bras and Waterloo, in which Napoleon's army was quite destroyed.

This last battle may be said to close the wondrous military career of the great captain of the age—the now Duke of Wellington. However, the Duke lived a long and useful life afterwards as a citizen; a life of great activity during the thirty-five years that passed away till the year of his regretted death, 1852. He became the foremost man in England, her greatest warrior, her ambassador, and prime minister; and after a long and useful life he died peacefully at Walmer Castle, at the age of eighty-three.

BILBOQUET, THE FRENCH DRUMMER-BOY.

Adapted from the French by George Elford.

CHAPTER I.

MOST of the lads who read the *Chatterbox* must have heard of the Great Napoleon I., and have read of his great exploits, of his tremendous battles, his many victories, and of his final overthrow at Waterloo, in 1815.

Our tale opens in the year 1812, the year in which the Great Napoleon invaded the vast country of Russia. In the 9th Regiment of the Line, that formed part of the invading army, was a little drummer-boy, aged ten years, the son of a trooper. His name was Frolut, but the soldiers called him 'Bilboquet.' He was so universally known as Bilboquet, that we will also call him by that name. Poor Bilboquet! He was such a droll-looking lad, so slender, so thin, and yet with a head so out of proportion to his poor weak little body, that his appearance excited the ridicule of his comrades. He was a capital drummer, however, thanks to the thick cane of the stern old drum-major, who taught him.

One day, it was the 27th July, 1812, the General received an order from the Emperor to take up a position on the opposite side of a wide ravine. This ravine was defended by a battery of six pieces of cannon, whose destructive fire swept down file after

file of the advancing soldiery. It was necessary that this battery should be stormed and taken. At this time Bilboquet's regiment was in advance, facing the terrible redoubt. While the soldiers were gazing, with very serious misgivings, at the grim-looking cannon, an aide-de-camp arrived at full speed, bringing the order for two companies of the Voltigeurs to take the battery.

A daring feat, even in that campaign of daring, for one might safely wager that more than three-fourths of those engaged in the enterprise would be swept away.

In spite of their intrepid daring, the veterans looked one upon the other and shrugged their shoulders, while some of the oldest warriors of the regiment were heard to growl forth,—

'Does the general think that those fellows,' pointing at the cannon, 'will send out roasted apples? or are we to be made mincemeat of for the Cossacks, that two hundred of us are to be sent against that redoubt?'

'Soldiers!' cried the aide-de-camp, 'it is the Emperor's orders!' and he rode off at full gallop.

'We must do it,' said an old sergeant, fixing his bayonet. 'Come on, comrades, we must obey the Little Corporal!* When he says, "Forward!" it is not for us to hesitate.'

Despite the old sergeant's speech, however, there was some wavering in the company, and twice the captain ordered the drum-major to the fore, to beat the charge; but that worthy remained, leaning on his thick cane, seemingly little disposed to obey the command.

All this while, Bilboquet was seated across his drum, whistling the 'quick march,' and beating time with his fingers; his eyes, at the same time, fixed upon his chief.

Finally, the order was given for the third time to the drum-major, but still no response; suddenly, Bilboquet sprang to his feet, slung his drum, grasped his drumsticks, and marched proudly under the nose of the drum-major; then, repaying him in one sentence for all the hard knocks he had received, exclaimed,—

'Will you advance *now*, you great poltroon?'

The drum-major lifted his cane to strike, but already Bilboquet was at the head of the two companies, beating the 'charge.'

The soldiers, ran after him, and advanced against the terrible battery. All at once, the six cannons thundered forth, and file after file of the brave Voltigeurs were stretched upon the earth to rise no more. The smoke for a moment hid everything, the roar of the cannon deafened everybody; but the smoke clearing away, and the noise ceasing for an instant, Bilboquet was seen about twenty paces in advance, beating the 'charge.' The Voltigeurs ran and ran, and still before them ran the little drummer, his terrible *r-r-an, r-ran*, urging them on. Another discharge from the battery pierced through, and almost destroyed the remnant of the two gallant companies. Bilboquet turned; scarcely fifty men of the gallant two hundred remained to follow his drum. Eager for vengeance, the boy redoubled his energy, till one would have thought that twenty drummers instead of one were beating to the charge. The soldiers dashed ahead with renewed courage, and entered the battery, Bilboquet the foremost, crying out with all his might to the Russians,—

'There's not much of us left, but what *is* left is good—just wait a moment!'

* A name given by the soldiers to Napoleon I.

CHAPTER II.

MEANWHILE Napoleon, mounted upon a small hill, saw the execution of the heroic enterprise. At every discharge of the terrible guns he was seen to start in his saddle, but when the soldiers dashed into the battery he lowered his field-glass, muttering,—

'Brave fellows!'

And ten thousand men of the Guard, who were behind him, commenced clapping their hands and applauding, saying one to another,—

'Bravo, Voltigeurs! Depend upon it those fellows knew how to do it!'

Napoleon gave an order to an aide-de-camp, and he dashed off to the battery, returning again at full gallop.

'How many entered there?' asked Napoleon.

'Forty,' answered the aide-de-camp.

'Forty crosses to-morrow,' said the Emperor, turning to his major-general.

Accordingly, on the morrow, all the regiment formed a large circle about the remainder of the two companies of Voltigeurs, and the names of the forty brave fellows who had taken the battery being called over, each man received the cross of the Legion of Honour. The ceremony being finished, everybody began to retire, when a voice from the ranks cried out, in tones of great surprise,—

'And I—am I to have nothing?

The General who distributed the crosses turned, and saw standing before him our brave Bilboquet, his cheeks very red, and his eyes filled with tears.

'You!' exclaimed the General; 'what do you want?'

'Monsieur le Général, I was one of the number,' said Bilboquet, almost angrily: 'it was I who beat the advance, and I was the first in the battery.'

'What can I do, my boy? They have forgotten you,' said the General. 'However,' added he, 'you are yet too young; they will give you a cross when you have a beard to your chin. Meanwhile, here is something to console you.'

Saying which, the General tendered a twenty-franc piece to poor Bilboquet, who at first seemed but little disposed to take it. There was silence awhile, every one watching him attentively; he stood before the General, the big tears rolling from his eyes. Those who had been the foremost to mock and jeer at him seemed now to watch him with the greatest anxiety; and there would speedily have been a petition in his favour, when suddenly he raised his head, as though a brilliant idea had shot into his brain, and, holding forth his hand, he said to the General,—

'Very well, Monsieur le Général, give it to me; it will be useful somewhere.'

And without more ado he put the twenty-franc piece into his pocket, and returned to the ranks.

(*Concluded in our next.*)

Bilboquet, the French Drummer-Boy.

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Chatterbox.

The Bell-ringers at the Hall door.

HALT!

(*Continued from page 4.*)

CHAPTER II.

I THINK I must have fallen asleep in the train without knowing it, for it seemed such a short time after we left Paddington that we were at Silverhill Station.

'Here we are,' said the Colonel; 'and there is Frank come to meet us.'

He had told us as we came along that he had a nephew staying with him, who was just my age, called Frank Halliday, and there he was on the platform. He was taller than I was, and very pleasant-looking, as far as I could see in the lamp-light, for it was quite dark by that time, and the stars had come out thickly in the frosty sky.

'Hullo, Frank!' said the Colonel, 'I did not expect to see you here. Is Harkaway here?'

'Yes, Giles drove him down; but the roads are not so slippery as we thought, and he came along first-rate. I didn't drive, you know, because of what you said, but I don't think I should come to grief if I had.'

'That's right,' said the Colonel. 'Now then this is Tom and that's Bertie; but you will have plenty of time to make friends, so let's be quick home.'

In a few minutes we were all in the high dog-cart, the very same in which Bertie and I had been run away with when we were stopping at Oatlands Farm; and it was the very same horse, too—Harkaway, who put back his ears and arched his neck at the sound of the Colonel's voice, as if he knew that his master had come home, and wished to show how glad he was. The road was as hard as iron, and the horse's hoofs made a jolly clinking noise as we rattled along between the snowy hedges. And there was old Bersiker, too, the deer-hound, keeping up his regular steady stride beside the carriage. He had come to the station, and pushed his nose into the Colonel's hand, and rubbed his big head against him, looking up at him with such great, solemn eyes, that were meant to say all sorts of loving welcomes.

'Here is the Hermitage.' Harkaway turns in at the well-known gate with a swing, and round the lawn, which looks like a great twelfth-cake covered with snow instead of sugar; and a Christmas-tree is not wanting either, though it is a solemn one, for the great, black spruce-fir opposite the door stands up dark and gaunt against the sky, with patches of snow resting here and there on its great boughs. The house looks quite bursting with warmth and light, like a person who cannot contain his laughter, but must let it come *chuckling* out: not a window was altogether dark, though from some came only a ray through the chink of a shutter, or a ruddy gleam between red curtains, or the glow of fire-light on a blind; and when the door opened, such a flood of light poured out on to the snowy lawn that I wondered a thaw did not begin immediately. In the house everything looked bright and warm, and red and glowing, from the huge logs blazing and sparkling half-way up the chimney, and the red holly-berries gleaming among the glossy leaves, to Mrs. Cheviot, the housekeeper's cheerful face, and little Rags', the Skye-terrier's, tongue.

'Why, I thought you was never coming, sir,' said Mrs. Cheviot, smiling and curtseying, 'you're so late. And these is the young gents, too, Master Tom and Master Bertie, and both of them grown out of mind! And now I'll be bound you'll be glad of your supper, and it's more than ready for you too.'

And before long we were all sitting down to supper in the snug dining-room, with its oak beam across the low ceiling, and thick, red curtains closely drawn, and a big book-case at the end, and a rack full of guns and whips in one corner, and a great tiger-skin instead of a hearth-rug; such a jolly room! just the sort of room I should like to have when I am a man. Just as we were finishing supper little Rags began to prick up his ears and bark, even in the very act of holding a piece of biscuit on his nose: and we heard Bersiker's deep voice too outside; and presently Polly, the girl who helped Mrs. Cheviot, came in and announced that the mummers were come.

'Oh, Uncle Will,' said Frank, 'do let's have them in!'

'All right,' replied the Colonel. 'I dare say they will be something new to such young Cockneys as Tom and Bertie.'

So presently we went out into the kitchen, and there we found the mummers; and indeed they were something new. There were six of them, all dressed in white smocks, trimmed up with coloured ribbons and smart scraps, and they all wore very tall paper caps, also adorned with ribbon and tinsel. They seemed very anxious to get behind one another, and when they had to say anything they generally spoke with their backs turned to us, walking quickly up and down, and rather out of breath. It was quite difficult to make out the story of what they acted, but the tallest of the boys was St. George of England, who flourished about a thick stick, and challenged any one to come and fight with him. This challenge was answered by one of the others, who introduced himself as 'Here comes I, a gallant French officer; a gallant French officer am I;' and then followed a fight with their sticks. They were evidently very much afraid of hurting themselves, and knocked the sticks carefully, one—two, one—two, poke; one—two, one—two, poke; and then the gallant French officer lay down slowly to avoid hurting his tall paper cap, and St. George put his foot on him, and waved his stick in triumph. Then came on a 'knight of Spain,' and St. George disposed of him too after the same succession of one—two, poke; one—two, poke, and a careful fall. Then appeared a third, rather more shy and red-faced than the others, announcing 'Here comes I, Bold Slasher; Bold Slasher is my name;' and he seemed to take more to beat him than the French or Spanish knights, when at last he fell down after a prolonged fight. St. George appeared to have qualms of conscience about his treatment of him, for, instead of triumphantly putting his foot on him as he had done to the other two, he called out

'Doctor, doctor, quickly come,
Set this here dead man up again.'

In answer to this call appeared Dr. Faustus, who was

really the same as the gallant French officer, only he carried a nutmeg grater instead of his sword. The nutmeg-grater was supposed to contain pills, and was rattled loudly. He said he could cure

'The stitch, the colic, and the gout,
The pains within and the pains without;'

And then, addressing Bold Slasher, he told him to 'Take some of this flip-flop, and get up on your tip-top.' And then the prostrate Slasher took something out of the nutmeg-grater, which so revived him that he was able to get up again. Then came in a somewhat unconnected person, who you would have supposed was the Spanish knight, if he had not declared himself to be 'Little Johnnie Jack, with my wife and family at my back,' which family was represented by a basketful of little grimy dolls. The last person introduced was, as he told us,

'Here comes I, old Father Christmas.
Christmas comes but once a-year,
Roast beef, plum-pudding, and plenty of good Christmas cheer.'

And then the nutmeg-grater, which had so revived Bold Slasher, was handed round for the audience to drop in some money. Then there was a pause, and the mummers nudged one another, and whispered, and seemed half inclined to shuffle out at the back-door; and we did not quite know if the entertainment was over and we were expected to go, or if there was more to follow: but at last it came out through the boldest of the set (I think it was St. George), that they would not mind singing a song if we wished it. So one of the party was bustled and elbowed forward, and began with a very red face, and eyes firmly fixed on the bacon-rack hanging from the kitchen ceiling, but I do not think he saw much of the great flitches of bacon and big hams with which the rack was laden, or the wreath of holly and laurel that adorned it, or even of the great branch of mistletoe in the middle. This, and the songs which followed, were all of a most melancholy kind, and we all felt that a weight was off our minds when the last note was over, and the last tall white cap disappeared out of the door. Bertie told me afterwards that he thought, when Polly said the mummers were come, that she meant 'those things at the British Museum —those Egyptian fellows, don't you know, Tom? all wrapped out and kept in glass-cases.'

After the mummers were gone came the carol-singers, breaking into the midst of a description of the battle of the Alma which the Colonel was giving us, with their shrill, sweet voices,

'Peace! peace! Jesus Christ is born to save.'

Then we went out again to the door, and somehow it seemed to put one so in mind of Christmas—I mean the first Christmas,—and found the singers were only little boys in scarlet comforters, and with their hands thrust deep down into their pockets, and their voices hoarse and tired with their long round, and only heard that they were singing the old song of the angels,—

'All glory be to God on high,
And in the earth be peace;
Goodwill henceforth from Heaven to men
Begin and never cease.'

We had not any more interruptions as we sat over the great glowing fire, with the Colonel telling us stories of his adventures in India and in the Crimea, and the time slipped away so fast that when at last we went up to bed the Colonel called after us,—

'Hullo, boys! a merry Christmas to you! Listen to the bells! What would your mother say to my keeping you up so late?'

And there, indeed, were the Christmas *bells* clashing and clanging through the frosty air from the belfry of the church a mile and a half away, and 'midnight was "already" past and over,' and the bells were doing their best to carry the 'glad tidings of great joy' far and near through the land.

CHAPTER III.

All this time I have hardly said anything of Frank Halliday, but before we went to bed that night we both felt as if he were quite an old friend, and we had known him for ever so long. He was the sort of fellow one feels at home with at once. Of course one cannot tell what a fellow is just from his face; I have learned that at school: but the Colonel said he was sure we should like him, so when he put his arm through mine at the station and said, 'I say, Tom, I'm glad you've come to spend Christmas,' I gave him a nudge and said, 'You can't be gladder than I am,' and I felt that we were friends. He was a year older than I was, and taller and slighter, but we were just about as strong as one another, for, when we came to wrestling, I threw him quite as often as he did me, though his long legs did get in the way sometimes and trip me up; but then we never came to a serious tussle together, and there is no telling what a fellow's real strength is till there is a little temper mixed up with it. He had a pleasant face, with very round, wide-open, grey eyes, and dark hair cut very close; and he had a way of beginning most of his sentences with 'I say,' and ending them off with 'don't you know.'

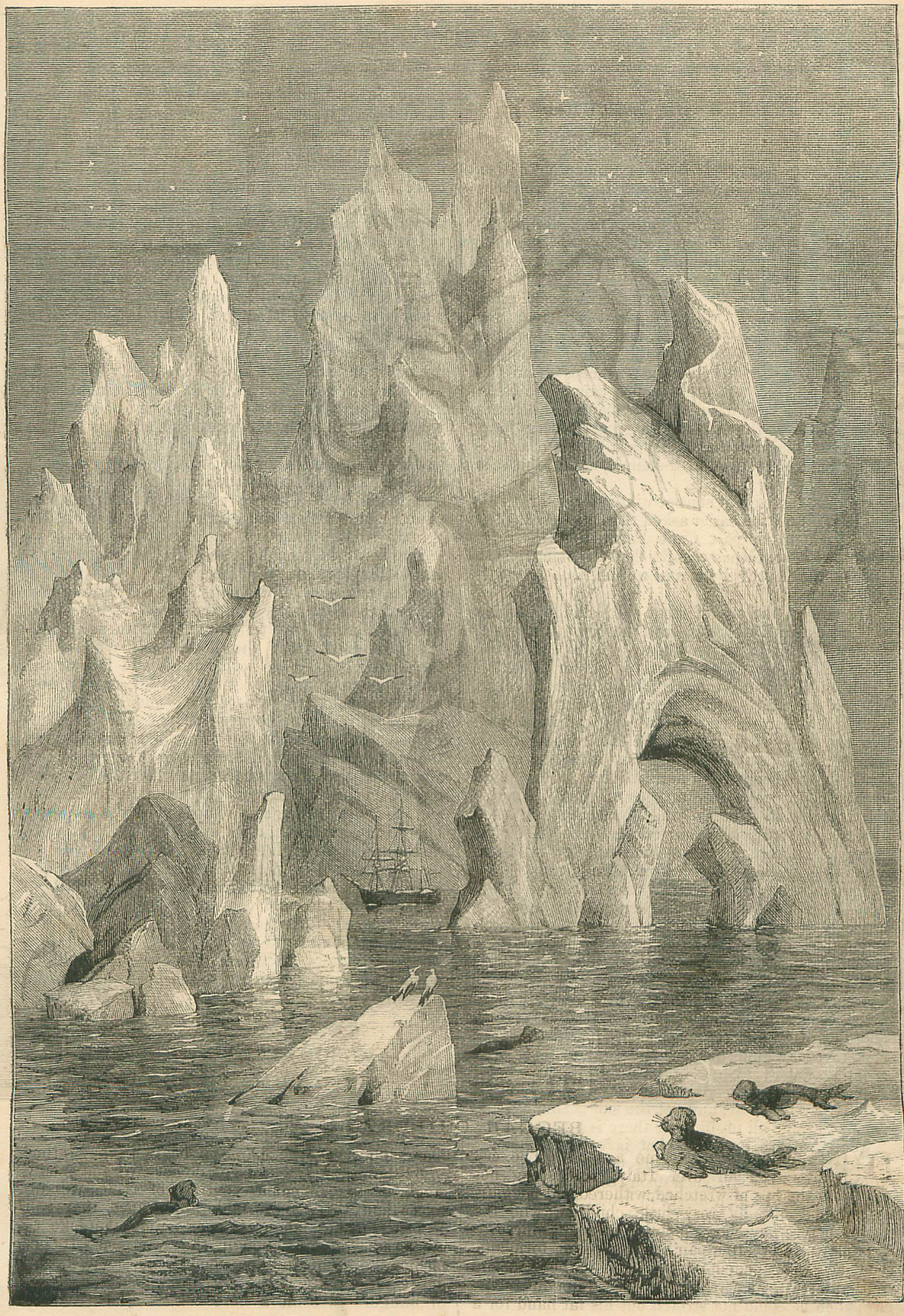
He was at Winchester, and was going on from there to Woolwich, for he was going to be a soldier.

'We're a regular family of soldiers, and no mistake,' he said. 'There's my eldest brother, Jack, in the Guards, and Sydney in the Rifles; and Oliver, he's at Woolwich still, and will get his commission next year, most likely. And then Minnie and Mabel have both married soldiers, and Isabel (she's the youngest of us all), I remember she made herself quite ill with crying because I told her she could never be an officer if she lived to be a hundred, and now she declares she'll marry a Russian, ever since she heard that the Duchess of Edinburgh is Colonel of a Russian regiment; and she has got that picture of her in her helmet and uniform stuck up in her bedroom. Then all my uncles are soldiers on both sides of the family—every one of them, except Uncle Ben, who's a parson; and father would have been, only he hurt his foot at school, and is a little lame, so he's a merchant instead, and he laughs and says he has to make the money for all the rest of them to spend. It was hard for him to be tied by the leg and have to do the money-grubbing, and sit up in a musty old office on a high stool, when he's got as much of a soldier's heart as any of them.'

(*To be continued.*)

BEGGAR CHILDREN.

'DYING of hunger! give me a sou!' The cry follows you all over Italy, proceeding not only from the lips of wretched, withered, old beggars, but whined out by rosy little children, who the minute before have been shouting and laughing over their play. Here are a pair of these young torments, their faces lengthened out to impress the rich and charitable passer-by; the baby never remembers the day when he could not stretch out his fat hand for a coin. They have no shame in begging, they rather enjoy the pastime; and if you do not give, and openly laugh at the ridiculous contrast of their whining voices and their comfortable appearance, they will as often as not laugh too, and enjoy the joke as much as you do, though they continue, Italian fashion, to point to their mouths as significant of desire for food, and the cry never ceases, 'Dying of hunger! give me a sou!' H. A. F.



Icebergs.

WONDERS OF NATURE.

I.—ICEBERGS.

AN Iceberg is a mountain of ice, which floats in the Northern Seas. 'It is,' in Dr. Kane's words, 'one of God's own buildings, preaching its lessons of humility to the little structures of man.'

Icebergs have been seen, whose topmost pinnacle was 300 feet, and more, above the level of the water. How far below the surface such an iceberg reaches cannot be said; but as a ship's keel, when afloat, is many feet beneath the sea level, so the bottom of a great iceberg must be many fathoms down. They are as white as alabaster, but sometimes earth-stained, and at the base they are blue.

How are these giant sons of winter formed? This was long a question easier asked than answered. Let us take a little trip past Cape Farewell, in the wake of our two adventurous vessels, that are going, please God, to the North Pole, and we shall see how icebergs are made.

We are in the sea of stout old Baffin, opposite a fiord, or channel, which pierces the Greenland coast, at right-angles to its backbone. It is called the Fiord of Omenak, but our sailors prefer to call it 'Jacob's Bight.' We have already seen icebergs. We saw one near Cape Farewell, journeying southward. Another we saw further on, and we noticed how the heavy swell dashed the loose ice against it with tremendous force, sometimes lifting a snowy spray to the height of a hundred feet, with a noise like thunder. We saw another suddenly tremble and roll, for its balance was disturbed, and then myriads of birds, who had roosted unseen on its glassy ledges, rose in the sunshine, and flew in circles round their resting-place until it settled again.

And now, too, something is the matter with the sun—it is no longer round but oval; nay, the heavenly bodies have been busy with the multiplication-table, for there is not one sun, but two—no longer one moon, but two moons. The compass is behaving shockingly, and if it does not mend its manners we shall have to throw it aside, like so much useless lumber. The rain freezes as it falls, and the decks and ropes are smooth as glass. And look, there is a huge, old-fashioned, india-rubber shoe, spouting water! Shoe! it is a fin-backed whale! A fine Arctic traveller you are! And how strange! It is nearly bed-time, and yet the sun is shining, and means to shine all night, only there is no such time.

Well, we are opposite what is called a glacier. This is a very immense coating of ice, of size unknown, which lies stretched upon the broad bosom of Greenland, and which moves evermore—slowly, very slowly, but very surely—towards the sea. When it reaches the cliff—well, what happens? I was thinking how to tell you. Ah, now I have it!

A man was once fishing in the fiord, or channel, in a boat. High above him hung the glacier, like a cliff of ice. A number of seals were sporting under it, and very near it. The fisherman thought he would like to shoot a seal, so he ordered the Esquimaux boatmen to row nearer the glacier. They had not gone very far, when he heard, 'Tick! tick! tick!' Strange to say, the seals were gone in an instant, and the Esquimaux made earnest signs that they must row further away from the shore. It was well they did so, for they were but a mile away, when, with a noise like the crack of a whip, a great mass fell into the water, and amid the commotion of the waves rocked backwards and forwards for almost a whole hour, until it settled. Then it floated away—an iceberg!

The same thing was seen by M'Clintock, when five or six miles distant from the mighty glacier in Melville Bay; a glacier which extends, unbroken, for forty or fifty miles. 'Everything,' he says, 'is painfully still, with the deathlike stillness of the most dreary desolation, excepting when an occasional iceberg splits off the glacier. Then we hear a rumbling crash, like distant thunder, and the wave occasioned by the launch reaches us in six or seven minutes, and makes the *Fox* roll lazily for a similar period.'

The fiord of Omenak is said to be the most remarkable place on the face of the globe for the genesis, or birth, of icebergs. Two hundred and forty of these monsters, of first-rate size, have been counted here at one time. They move in an endless procession from the fiord, truly children of the glacier. They are both friends and foes of the sailor. Now he makes fast to them for security, now he steers wide, lest two of them should meet and crush his frail bark between them. They are dangerous neighbours, for the firing of a gun, or even the sound of a voice, detaches loose fragments, and alters the poise of the whole mass. Nor do they obey ordinary rules of the road, for sometimes, when the surface ice is drifting south with the wind, a berg may be seen moving north, right in the teeth of the breeze, and crushing through the floes. This strange movement is caused by a strong current acting on the submerged portion of the iceberg, and carrying it on, in spite of all the wind can do, by its action on the upper surface of the mass.

Such are some facts about Icebergs, gathered from Arctic explorers, to which many others might be added; only enough, perhaps, has been said for the present.

G. S. O.

BILBOQUET, THE FRENCH DRUMMER-BOY.

(*Concluded from page 7.*)

CHAPTER III.

FROM that day nobody laughed or poked fun at little Bilboquet, but still he did not become a bit more sociable; on the contrary, he seemed more retiring than ever, more thoughtful, as though some famous project was being hatched in his brain.

Some time after the victorious French troops entered Smolensk, Bilboquet was there, and on the day of his arrival he went to take a walk through the town, quiz-

zing with the air of a critic almost every face he met. The countrymen who wore the largest beards came in for the largest share of Bilboquet's scrutiny. There were some very long beards, and some very bushy, and most of them of a very ugly red. Bilboquet quizzed each and marched on. Finally, our drummer arrived at the Jewish quarter of Smolensk. The Jews in Smolensk, as in the whole of Russia and Poland, sell all kinds of merchandise, and have a particular part of the town given them wherein to reside. As soon as Bilboquet had entered 'Jewry' there, he seemed perfectly enraptured. Enraptured at the merchandise? Not a bit of it; the merchandise was totally unheeded by him—the long, flowing beards of ebony blackness that swept the breasts of the venerable-looking Israelites, strange to say, were the objects that so enchanted the little drummer! What ailed the lad? Finally, he entered a little shop, kept by a Jew with a most superb black beard. The merchant approached our friend, and asked him humbly, and in bad French,—

'What can I do for you, my little gentleman?'

'I want thy beard!' answered Bilboquet, stoutly.

'My beard!' cried the astounded merchant. 'You are joking!'

'I tell thee, slave, I want thy beard!' repeated the drummer, laying his hand upon his sabre. 'Don't think I would steal it from thee; here is a Napoleon, take for thy beard, and give me the change.'

The poor merchant vainly besought Bilboquet to listen to reason; he was as obstinate as a mule. A dispute began, which soon drew some soldiers to the spot; they entered the shop, to know the cause of the uproar, and the drummer's whim tickled their fancy so immensely that they compelled the poor Jew to surrender his beard. One of them, a barber of the regiment, drew his razors from his pocket and shaved the unhappy Hebrew, delivering the beard carefully to Bilboquet, who carried it off in triumph.

Upon arriving at his quarters, our drummer got the tailor to sew the beard upon a piece of the skin of a broken drum, and then, without explaining anything, Bilboquet put the beard in the bottom of his knapsack.

The affair caused merriment for some days, but the soldiers soon had to think of other things. They resumed their march, and thought no more of little Bilboquet, and, finally, they arrived at Moscow. There frightful disasters befell them; the awful cold, and the devastations caused by the Russians, deprived the French of all their resources; famine attacked them, and soon they were compelled to retreat across a country that presented to them an almost endless waste of ice and snow. I cannot describe the horrors of that campaign, it would be a task too frightful, let it suffice us to say that everybody returned as best he could, and that scarcely one regiment remained entire, or under the command of the generals. There were a few, however, who remained, in a measure, compact, and in tolerable discipline, and Bilboquet's regiment was one of them. His regiment formed part of the rear-guard, and checked the onslaught of the furious bands of Cossacks, who hovered about the retreating army, murdering every unhappy straggler they met.

One day the French rear-guard had just crossed a small river, and in order to check the pursuit of the enemy they attempted to blow up the bridge by which they had crossed, but the powder-casks had been put into position so hastily that the explosion produced little effect. The arches, it is true, were dismantled, but all the woodwork leaned still upon a great beam that supported it, and which, if the enemy came up, would soon enable him to repair the bridge.

The general in command, seeing that the safety of a part of the army depended upon the destruction of the bridge, would have sent some sappers to cut the beam, and so hurl down the remainder of the woodwork, but at the moment when they were about to descend into the river the enemy appeared on the opposite side, and opened such a terrible fire that it seemed impossible for a sapper to reach the beam. The French had already begun to retire, when all at once a soldier was seen to leap into the river, with an axe over his shoulder.

He sank, but soon appeared again, and by his great beard they deemed him one of the sappers, who had devoted himself to almost certain destruction in order to ensure the safety of his comrades. Every man of the regiment watched him eagerly as he swam; the foe rained such a hail of bullets into the river that the water fairly bubbled, but still the brave sapper valiantly held his way. Finally, after great efforts, he reached at the foot of the pile, and with a few blows of his axe cut the remainder of the beam asunder, for, although the beam had looked so enormous, it was three parts broken through. Suddenly it parted, and with a deafening crash the woodwork of the bridge tumbled into the river—the brave sapper disappeared with it!

Among the ruins, the gallant fellow rose, and struck out for the shore. Everybody was full of admiration, for, in spite of their miseries, the poor soldiers could yet admire noble deeds. They threw poles towards the swimmer, and encouraged him as he swam. The General himself approached the side of the river, when to his astonishment, and the amazement of all, Bilboquet scrambled up the river's bank, with a great black beard hanging to his chin.

'What is this?' cried the General. 'What means this masquerade?'

'Monsieur le Général, it is I!' cried the drummer; 'it is I, Bilboquet, to whom you promised to give the cross when I should have a beard to my chin; I hope you will think this a famous one. I assure you I have spared no expense to get it; your own money, General, bought it, and I think you have the worth of your twenty francs!'

The General stood amazed at so much shrewdness in one so young; he shook Bilboquet by the hand, as though he had been a man, and gave him, there and then, the cross he wore at his own button-hole—his own reward for long and hard service. From that time everybody in the regiment treated Bilboquet with great kindness, and the stern old drum-major was never more known to raise over him his heavy cane.

"I want thy beard," answered Bilboquet.

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Published for the Proprietors by W. WELLS GARDNER, 2 Paternoster Buildings, London.

No. 3. *Dec.* 16, 1875. *Weekly—One Halfpenny.*

Chatterbox.

Old Balaclava Jack.

'OLD JACK.'

BALACLAVA made sad havoc with the horses as well as with the officers and men of the Light Brigade. My own gallant regiment was a mere skeleton.

Old Jack's rider was killed; but no one knew what had become of the horse. Jack was a favourite; he was such a steady, sensible old fellow, always ready for duty, and never shamming lameness or sickness, as I have known other troop-horses do. Then he knew his drill quite as well, if not better, than the captain of his troop.

Very soon after that battle where Jack lost his rider, and his troop lost himself, we changed our camp, and in a few days more again struck our tents and removed to another position.

Death-wounds and the cholera had deprived the regiment of all its active officers, so I was ordered to give up for a time my staff appointment, and rejoin my regiment, and assume the command until the fates or the winds sent some one to relieve me. A few nights after I rejoined—bitterly cold nights they were, too—we were roused up by the cry, 'Turn out at once! the enemy is upon us!' Then there was the usual scurry: looking for overalls that got pulled on the wrong side foremost, and boots that refused to be pulled on anyhow.

As soon as possible, the regiment—that is, all that was left of it—was mounted, and we were peering through the murky darkness to discover the enemy. We could hear the hoofs of the enemy's horses as they tore up the side of the hill on which we were encamped: nearer and nearer still, until they were within a few yards of us. Then we could see that the horses had no riders: what could it mean? The mystery was soon explained by an Irish trooper, who exclaimed, 'What, ho! here is Old Jack back again!'

The old fellow was taken prisoner by the enemy at Balaclava, and disliking captivity he seized the first chance of escaping, broke his halter, took to his heels, and was followed, horselike, by the Russian horses near him.

A rare gain those same Russian horses were to us. They were all greys, but we exchanged them for more suitable animals with the artillery on the next day. We had thirty remounts through Old Jack's fidelity to his standard.

The gallant old fellow was covered with mud and foam when he forced himself into the ranks of his troop that night. He must have gone first to the ground where the corps was encamped the morning of the battle, and then tracked the different changes of the regiment until he gave us that sudden alarm, and brought with him such welcome companions.

It is pleasant to add that Old Jack escaped all the dangers of war, returned home, and, I have been told, ended his days at Windsor, as her Majesty the Queen directed that he should not be sold when 'unfit for further service,' but be sent there.

ST. OMER.

HOW WE SET UP OUR SOUP-KITCHEN.

'JACK!' I exclaimed suddenly, 'I have an idea!'

The exclamation won no answer from my brother, who was unfeelingly absorbed in his breakfast. He had come down so late that I was the only member of his family who had had patience to wait for him, and keep his coffee hot. A little hurt, therefore, at his silence, I repeated the words still more emphatically.

'What! two in one day?' said Jack, passing up his cup.

'Yes, really! Now, Jack, is it not extraordinary no one ever thought of it before? We ought to have a Soup-kitchen.'

'Well, so we ought, I dare say; but that's the Vicar's affair, not yours.'

'I don't see why it shouldn't be mine,' I said. 'It does make me so miserable to see the poor people in this wretched weather, and so many men out of work. Jack, I feel as if I must do something; if father will give me leave, and the Vicar, I shall try to start a Soup-kitchen.'

'But what do you know about soup, Minnie? How will you begin?'

'Oh, first of all, of course, we must have subscriptions; I know you'll give me something; and then I have thought of a copper belonging to Widow Boddy, in Lamb's Lane—just the very place; and I have got a receipt for making the soup. I've been thinking about it, and I spoke to May this morning; she's going to help.'

'Well, I wish you good luck, Minnie; here's five shillings.'

I now propounded the plan to my father and mother, who gave consent provided the Vicar approved. Armed with this, before I was ten minutes older, behold me, Minnie Warren, ringing the Vicarage bell It was not with any fear I asked Mr. Norris's approval; he, dear old gentleman, was not only delighted with the proposal, but had an unbounded faith in my powers that was quite refreshing. He gave me half-a-guinea; this, with the like sum from my father, and Jack's five shillings, was what we had to start upon. 'Come, May,' I said, 'we must now go round for subscriptions.'

I can't help having a little secret belief of my own that I was really intended for a beggar, I get on so remarkably well in that line; but my success in collecting for the soup-kitchen surpassed my own expectations. I don't think May and I met with one single refusal, and when we reached home our little bag contained over nine pounds.

May was for resting that afternoon, but I could not. The weather was very cold, I urged, and next Thursday the soup-kitchen should open. I went at once to visit the copper, and to see about having the little outhouse made ready, then to have a few small bills printed, and finally to make purchases. I bought a chopper to cut up our meat with, a kitchen-table' large kettle, quart ladle, and so on. The materials

were all got in by Wednesday afternoon, and then we set to work cutting up the meat, carrots, and onions. May so disliked this last-named useful but vulgar vegetable, that when I began upon them she fled. I must confess that I shed many tears over the work; but it would never do to give way, so I manfully peeled about a gallon and went home. I was not very welcome in the family circle that night, and could not help mournfully murmuring to myself, 'All the perfumes of Araby will never sweeten this little hand' as I got into bed.

In the morning perhaps the odour was not so strong, or I had grown used to it, at any rate. I sprang up as the clock struck seven, and roused May: we had an early breakfast and went off to see after the soup.

Mrs. Boddy had been employed to light the fire and set things going; 'to boil four hours,' the receipt said, allowing two other hours to get it all in boiling order. She declared it had been 'on the boil' at seven, and as she had been there before six, we sent her off to get some food, and set about stirring.

'It doesn't look very inviting,' said May, peering into the brown mass, strewed thickly with slices of carrot and celery, and little scraps of bacon.

'It smells delicious,' I rejoined, wielding vigorously one of the children's wooden spades, which we used as a 'stir-up.'

'We mustn't forget the dumplings,' said May, as she took her turn.

'Oh, no,' I answered; 'Mrs. Boddy is going to see to them.'

Mrs. Boddy returned in a short space of time; she was a stout, pleasant woman, and took a great interest in our work.

'We shall soon make a cook of you, Miss,' she said to me. 'And do let me pin your dress back, it's all of a spatter.'

I submitted to have my skirt turned up. 'And now, Mrs. Boddy,' I said, 'the dumplings.'

'All right, Miss; they won't take long.'

Next to the little back-place in which we had the copper was a small room where a fire was lighted, and here we began our dumplings. I could hardly help in making them, I felt in such a flutter lest anything should go wrong.

'Why, the bread has never come, Mrs. Boddy!' I exclaimed, for I had made a bargain with a baker to supply us with rolls, one for each portion of soup, at a penny a-piece.

'It'll be here soon, Miss,' said cheery Mrs. Boddy; and at this moment May called out to be relieved, and I rushed back to her. As we stood by the copper together, the baker's boy came in and put the rolls out by Mrs. Boddy, saying,—

'Good morning, missus; it's as cold as charity.'

We looked at the hot jorum of soup and smiled.

'If it was only ready he should have some to warm him, poor fellow!' said May.

Presently Mrs. Boddy entered with seventy-two dumplings, which are put in; and now the great aim in stirring is to keep them from sticking to the bottom, which they are perversely inclined to do.

Twelve o'clock is the hour named for serving out, and at half-past eleven we began flavouring. The quantity of salt required to give the soup any taste at all was astonishing, and it was rather fun shaking in the pepper and mint. We serve out a basin to Mrs. Boddy, and then share one between ourselves.

'It is very good,' said my sister, after a few spoonfuls; 'but a little goes a long way.'

'That's just the beauty of it,' I said; 'it is so supporting.'

We made our arrangements—putting the rolls on a table, with a basin for pennies. And now Mrs. Norris and two or three other ladies arrived to see how we were getting on. Presently the poor people began to come; we had given away a good many tickets, and I sat at the door to take them. How cold and pinched many of them looked, and how pleased they were! Mr. Norris arrived, had a basin of soup, paid his penny, and then stayed by to speak a few kind words to each of his poor friends.

Jack strolled in, holding with one hand a little shivering child, while in the other he bore a huge pitcher.

'I found this poor little morsel,' he said, 'struggling with this capacious jug, and bound for "toup," as she called it.'

'Have you a penny, my dear?' I asked.

The mite looked up at me with her pretty blue eyes.

'Only a farden,' she lisped.

'She shan't be robbed of that!' exclaimed Jack, and he paid her penny and saw her off under the guardianship of a somewhat larger child.

Jack now asked for a basinfull, especially requesting that he might be favoured with a very large dumpling, which he found some difficulty in disposing of; however, as he paid sixpence for it, we had no right to complain if he did not quite finish it.

One after another the tickets came in. There was my old friend Mrs. Wakelin, the umbrella-mender.

'Got to pay a penny for bread!' she exclaimed. 'Why, I never knew that; I haven't brought one.'

'I'm exceedingly sorry for you,' said Jack, feeling in his pockets.

'A penn'orth of help's worth a pound of pity, sir,' observed Mrs. Wakelin, crushingly.

'Quite right, old lady,' returned Jack, laughing; 'and here is the penny.'

Mrs. Wakelin grinned; took it, bobbed a 'Thank you, sir,' and went up with her can.

Afterwards came old Ginger, a very worthy, but certainly, I should think, *the* very dirtiest old man that ever was seen. He is always most regular at church, week-days and Sundays, but nothing Mr. Norris can do will induce him to wash. Jack maintains that he has dropped out of the Middle Ages; I think, myself, he must be rather like some of those old hermits who were so terribly afraid of water.

Here is Mrs. Jacob, whose husband drinks; and you may read the sad tale in every line of her poor worn face: her clothes are wretched, and she walks very feebly.

Then comes old Lincoln, stone-deaf, and with a sick wife at home, but so good and patient. His smile as he gets his hot soup and bread is quite beautiful.

I can hardly refrain from tears, as the portions are distributed to the poor, hungry creatures; and I know Jack feels it too, by the way he whistles and jingles his money.

At last all the tickets are out: but there is still a

little soup left, so we bring in the old crossing-sweeper, and Jack fetches an odd man or two, and they sit round the fire to a good meal, and go off again comforted and warm.

May and I feel hot and tired. The Vicar says something very kind, and then we put on our jackets and shake ourselves into order, and it is settled that the Soup-kitchen is an institution.

M. J. KENNEDY.

THE TONGUE.

IF thou wishest to be wise,
Keep these words before thine eyes:—
What thou speak'st, and how, beware;
Of whom, to whom, when, and where.

HAIR-DRESSING.

IN the sunny South everything is done out of doors; the houses are built neither for occupation nor comfort, but simply as a shelter from occasional bad weather. So the people eat and drink, work and sleep, in the streets, bringing out their chairs, and making to themselves sitting-rooms in every shady or sunny corner.

It is the commonest thing in the world to see the women arrange each other's hair in the street, settling down comfortably to comb, and tie, and plait their neighbour's; no one taking the least notice, unless to stand and chat over the toilet.

It is not wonderful that the cheerful sunlight is preferred to the dark, gloomy, wretched house, for the poor have no glass in their windows, only iron bars across the opening; and their dwelling is as

often as not shared by goats, cows, and chickens. I was taken once by an old woman all over her house: it had been an ancient monastery, very roomy, and ruinous. The monks were gone, but she had no lack of company; chickens were roosting all over her kitchen, a cow and calf occupied what had been the hall, and going up a ladder-like stair to the upper regions, an immense sheep blocked up the way, and had to be sternly requested to stand on one side, or to hop down out of our way. H. A. B.

HALT!

(*Continued from page* 11.)

FRANK told us all this that first evening while we sat over the fire, and the Colonel put in a few words here and there.

'And are you really going to be a soldier?' asked Bertie.

'To be sure he is!' answered the Colonel. 'Why, he has been born and bred a young soldier! Weren't you, Frank, my boy? He was born on the 18th of June, the day of the battle of Waterloo, and he was christened Wellesley, as well as Frank, after the Duke of Wellington. They would have called him Arthur Wellesley if Jack's name had not been Arthur; but still he has got something of the great Duke belonging to him, and I hope it will be something more than his name. Jack had just got his commission when Frank was born, and he and his mother were as proud as anything of his new uniform; and there he was strutting about the drawing-room in his fine feathers when I came in on the morning of the christening, for I was one of the sponsors. Frank's mother was not well enough to go to church; she was always rather ailing, but there she was on the sofa with the baby in her arms—Master Frank, there; a little, red-faced, crumpled-up thing, with blinking slits of eyes, flourishing his ridiculous fists about like a young prize-fighter. And then both mother and Jack declared that the baby could not take its eyes off the bright hilt of Jack's sword, and that it tried to catch hold of it, and they declared the baby was a miracle of forwardness; and I was treated like a regular old heathen because I was not even sure that the thing had any eyes at all, or if it had, whether they were not shut; and as for its hands, they seemed to me more inclined to hit its own nose than to do anything else. And then, what does my young Ensign Jack do but take off his crimson scarf and put it round the baby, over its grand christening robe. Just then the other god-parents came in, and then there was a bustle to get off, for fear of being late for church; and the baby was wrapped up in its cloak and things, and no one noticed anything out of the common, except, I suspect, that young rascal Jack, who was always up to a joke. When we got to church, and the service was half over, and the baby was to be put in the clergyman's arms, the nurse slipped off the cloak, and there, round the baby's frock, was still the crimson scarf, and there it remained while he was made a Christian of. The mother did not much like it when she heard of it when we got home, and she scolded mischievous Jack; but when we came to talk it over it did not seem so very bad, for we had promised that he should be Christ's faithful soldier and servant till his life's end, and manfully fight under His banner, and whatever his future might be there was no changing that.'

'And have you always wished to be a soldier all your life?' said Bertie.

'Oh, yes!' was Frank's answer. 'There's nothing else in the world that I'd care to be, don't you know. There's no profession like it: is there, Uncle Will?'

'None, my lad, none,' said the Colonel, with his eye blazing up; and then he pulled himself up short. 'But that is only our opinion, you know, and other people may think very differently from you and me.'

'I say, what are you going to be?' asked Frank.

I was silent, but Bertie answered for me. 'Oh! that's been settled a long time; he's to be articled to father and be a lawyer: that's quite decided.'

I don't know how it was, but I felt quite angry with Bertie as he spoke. I had often talked to mother about this, and then it had seemed very pleasant, and the very jolliest plan in the world, and that it would be a fine thing some day to be a partner, and to have a room at the office of my own, with a Turkey carpet, and leather arm-chair, and large tin boxes lettered with the names of the clients, and full of papers done up with red tape, and to have 'Carter and Carter' on the black board at the door; but now, all at once, it seemed so slow, and tame, and I made haste to interrupt Bertie.

'Oh, no! of course that's only talk, and there is nothing settled at all for certain, and I don't think I should like office-work at all; it's so dull and slow.'

'Well, Tom, there's a good deal that is very dull in a soldier's life. It's not all brilliant charges, and skirmishing, and hair-breadth escapes, and forced marches; there's a great deal of drill, and barracks, and foreign stations, and enforced idleness: there's often more marking time than marching, I can tell you.'

'Oh, Colonel! I would like to be a soldier!'

'Would you, old man? Why, it's not every one that's fitted to be a soldier.'

'Why, of course,' I said, getting very hot and red, 'I know there are some fellows who are cowardly, and stupid, and all that, and they would not do for soldiers at all, but I don't think I'm that sort.'

The Colonel laughed. 'I did not mean that, Tom. I think you would be brave enough, but bravery is not the first quality in a soldier; there are lots of brave fellows who would never make good soldiers.'

I suppose I opened my eyes wide at this, for he seemed to see how surprised I was; and he went on,—'Frank knows what the first duty of a soldier is—don't you, my boy? but then he has been in training all his life. Look here, I'll tell you a story, and it's a grand story too; but perhaps you may have heard of the loss of the troop-ship *Birkenhead*?'

'No,' I said, 'I haven't; do tell us.'

'Well, it was a big troop-ship, with 630 souls on board of it, most of them soldiers, with a few women-folk. Not far from the Cape of Good Hope, in sight of land, the ship struck on a rock, and at once began filling and settling down. You can fancy what terror

and confusion there was; some were drowned in their berths, some were washed overboard. Then they ran to launch the boats, but these would not have been enough to save half, or even a quarter, of those on board. I dare say you will think there was a rush to get into the boats, but these were English soldiers, commanded by an Englishman, and at the word of command they mustered on deck as quietly as if they had been on parade, and stood there, rank and file, on the sinking ship, while the order was given and carried out, "Women and children to the boats." Think of these men, most of them powerful young fellows, with the life hot and strong in every vein! When the women and children were safely in the boats, the cry rose, "Each man for himself! To the boats!" But again the Captain spoke. "What? swamp the boats with the women and children? No! die like men." And they died; went down, rank and file, with the sinking ship, and met their death in the water as steadily as they would have gone through their drill on parade.'

There was a quiver of the Colonel's lip under his moustache as he finished, and he was silent for a minute or two; and I did not wish to speak, for I felt a lump in my throat which made my voice unsteady, even when I spoke next.

'Well, Tom?' said the Colonel at last.

'It was glorious!' I said.

'Glorious, indeed!' said the Colonel; 'true bravery! and yet they only stood still, true to a soldier's first duty, and that is—— eh, Frank?'

'Obedience,' said Frank.

'Till death,' added the Colonel.

CHAPTER IV.

Frank came into our bedroom next morning to tell us that it was time to get up, and that it was a splendid frosty morning, and that the ice on the pond must be two inches thick, and more.

'I say,' he said, 'can you and Bertie skate? Uncle Will has promised to teach me, and I was to have begun yesterday, only he went off to fetch you, don't you know.'

'Well,' I replied, 'I've never tried skating, so I don't know if I could do it, but I can slide first-rate.'

'Oh, I say, that is jolly! then we can all learn together. I found an old pair of skates yesterday, and went down to the forge and ground them myself. There's one of them split a little, but I spliced it up with string, so that it's as safe as a trivet; and there are heaps of straps, and we can take it by turns to skate—half an hour each, or something like that, don't you know; and the other two can slide. There's such a jolly long slide all across the pond near the church; but sliding is nothing to skating when one knows the dodge. There was young Campbell, the parson's nephew, larking about no end yesterday, and cutting figure eight, and going backwards, and doing outside edge and all sorts of fun, and never tumbled down once; and it looked as easy to him as walking; and easier too, for it was slippery walking yesterday, don't you know. He offered to lend me his skates if I liked to have a try, but Uncle Will said he would rather put me in the way of it himself; so I had to wait till to-day, and I'm glad of it now you've come, for we can all begin together. But I say, look here, what a lark! here's the water frozen in your bath! What a frost it must be! I'll just get the poker and break it for you. My room is over the kitchen, so my water was all right, though it was just cold, and no mistake.'

He stopped most of the time we were dressing talking to us, and then rushed off to see if the pump was frozen up, and whether Bersiker might have a hot breakfast, as it was Christmas and so bitterly cold; and by-and-by we heard his voice from the kitchen, where he was busy helping to pour hot water down the pump, and to soak Bersiker's biscuit into a hot steaming mess, that must have been very comforting to the great, patient old dog. When we came down to breakfast, the dining-room window looked liked a Christmas card, with the thick white snow on the sill, and a holly branch thick with berries bending down from the bush by the wall, and a fat, cheerful-looking robin, with a puffed-out red breast and bright twinkling eyes, watching for crumbs. The breakfast was ready on the table, with the urn spluttering and bubbling away like a fussy old woman. But there was something else on the table besides the breakfast, for our plates were heaped up and almost hid with brown-paper parcels. Frank's plate was as full as ours, and the Colonel's was not empty, but his was chiefly full of letters. The Colonel was not down yet, but Frank came running in from the kitchen with the marks of Bersiker's great paws, in snow, on each shoulder, and said he had been thinking we were never coming; he wished so much to see what his presents were, but had waited till we came that we might open all our parcels together. So then we fell to such a cutting of string, and tearing of paper, and bursting of sealing-wax, and then such shouts of delight! for of course there were exactly the very things that we wanted most. How curious it is, isn't it? that father and mother seem to guess just what one wishes for without ever asking! Now, how could they have known that we should have such a chance of learning skating? and yet the first parcels that Bertie and I opened contained a splendid pair of skates for each of us; such bright steel and sharp screws, and shining new straps, it looked as if a cat could have skated if those skates were once on. And Frank had just such another pair from the Colonel, exactly like ours; the same size, wood, straps, and everything.

'Oh, I say,' he said, 'this is different from those horrid old things I took such pains with yesterday; but I never dreamt that Uncle Will would be so jolly: but he always is such a brick, don't you know.'

(To be continued.)

A RIDDLE.

BY LORD MACAULAY.

CUT off my head, the singular I act;
Cut off my tail, the plural I appear:
Cut off both head and tail, to nothing I contract,
Nothing to blind man's touch or wise man's ear.

What is my head cut off? The ocean tide.
What is my tail cut off? A shining river.
And through their mighty depths I fearless glide,
Parent of sweetest sounds, yet mute for ever.

(Answer in our next.)

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No. 4. Dec. 23, 1875. *Weekly—One Halfpenny.*

Chatterbox.

Out in the Street.

OUT IN THE STREET.

THE white, white snow,
It lies in the street,
Crisp and pleasant
Under the feet.
All on the house-tops,
All on the ground,
It came and settled
With never a sound.

'Oh,' say the children,
'The nice white snow!'
—Children who have
Warm homes, you know:
And, 'Oh, it is pleasant
Out in the street!'
Say the children
With well-shod feet.

But, say children
Who have no home,
'It is bitterly cold
Now the snow is come:'
And the white, white snow
Looks dreary and sad,
When little children
Are poorly clad.

Oh! children dear,
Who have cosy beds,
And cosy house-roof
Over your heads,
And thick warm clothing,
And well-shod feet:
—It is bitter for some
In the cold, cold street.

E. M. A. F. S.

HALT!

(*Continued from page 23.*)

'WHO'S that calling me names?' said the Colonel, coming in just then. 'Good morning, and a happy Christmas to you all. This looks like business, as if you were all going to turn Icelanders. It's lucky for you, Master Tom, that I made a good guess at what was inside the parcels that came for you yesterday, or I should have got you each another pair of skates like Frank's; and as you have not either of you got four legs at present, they would not have been much good to you.'

The skates were father's present, and mother sent Bertie a small microscope, which was what he had been wishing for ever so long. I am glad she did not send one to me, for, though I do like to have a look at Bertie's when he has anything fresh to show, still after ten minutes or so I get very much bored; and after all I don't see what the good is of knowing that one of one's hairs looks so nasty and unpleasant through a glass, or that one's skin has such holes and marks in it. I had a box of tools instead, such a beauty! not like those stupid things that you see at the bazaars, of which the head of the hammer flies off at the first blow you give, and the gimlet doubles in half, but real, regular tools, that proper carpenters use, and that one can bang away with, without ever wearing them out. The Colonel had bought Bertie a paint-box and me a fishing-rod and tackle—six joints of the rod—and a winch, and a leather-case full of lines of all sorts and hooks of all sizes. I began wishing it were spring, that I might go out and try my rod, till I looked at the skates again, and then I was glad it was winter. Edie had worked us both a pair of slippers, with dogs' heads on them, and we could not help wondering how she had ever got them done, as we knew how slow a process putting her needle in and drawing it out was. And then there were Christmas cards—robins, and clowns, and turkeys, and plum-puddings, and holly, and mistletoe, and all sorts of bright colours and good wishes. But I must not stop to describe them all, for the Colonel was ready for breakfast, and called to us to clear the decks of all the brown paper and presents, and see if we could find anything to eat among the ruins.

After breakfast we went out to the stables and to see Bersiker, and to have a few slides across the pond in the orchard, where the ducks were waddling about with orange-coloured, flapping feet, on the ice, in a state of sulky displeasure, every now and then raising up a chorus of indignant quacking. The time passed so quickly that we were quite surprised to hear the Colonel calling to us that it was time to start for church, and we had to run in to give each other a brush down and fetch our Prayer-books.

That was a pleasant walk to church. Every cottage that we passed seemed to be turning out a group of happy-looking people to go to church; jolly old grandfathers, with green smock-frocks and white hair, leading little toddling chaps just like them—green smock-frocks, white hair and all, only a good many sizes smaller; old grandmothers in red cloaks and poke bonnets, who only needed broomsticks to turn into old witches, and fly off to sweep the cobwebs off the moon. The younger women seemed, most of them, to be left at home—to cook the dinner, I suppose, and come down to the garden-gate with the baby to see the rest of the party off; and most of the younger men had blue neckties and bits of mistletoe stuck in their hats; and every one had a touch of the hat, or a courtesy, or a good wish, for the Colonel.

In the church hands had been busy decorating as much as the queer old place would allow; wreaths clung round the rough old pillars, and traced out the round arches; the three-decker pulpit, reading-desk, and clerk's desk, were also adorned with wreaths and crosses, and a piece of holly was even stuck behind the old hour-glass, which used to time the sermon in days gone by. On the gallery, at the west end, trails of ivy and holly-boughs half hid the black letters, which told how one old fellow gave 6*d.* a-week for ever to six old women, and how Dame Hephzibah Sadgrave left the rent of a house in St. Giles-in-the-Fields to give bread to the poor of the parish of Silverhill. Even the lumbering old north gallery, where the boys behave so badly on Sunday afternoons, had a text in large letters along the front, 'Glory to God in the

highest;' and I wonder the people did not get up and tear the gallery down bodily, for they must have felt that it was not there for God's glory or for man's good. In one of the high narrow pews near the pulpit sat Farmer Blossom and his wife, our old friends at Oatlands Farm, who beamed at us over the pew-door as we passed by. Colonel Morris had a square pew further on, with faded green cushions, and the sides were so high that we could only see the people who were in the next pew, or the clergyman when he was in the pulpit. It was so frosty that one could see the breath coming from people's mouths and nostrils, like the pictures of dragons.

In spite of pews and gallery the service was very hearty and Christmas-like, every one joining in the responses as if they really meant them; and when it came to the hymn, 'Hark, the herald angels,' there was such a chorus as I never heard anywhere else, and I found myself joining in and singing with all my heart, and at the pitch of my voice.

CHAPTER V.

Frank, Bertie, and I went home together, for we had left the Colonel behind us in church. He told us to be quick home, as there was a lot of old people coming for their Christmas dinners, and Mrs. Cheviot would want us to help her give them out: so we did not take long to get back, though we were rather tempted to stop at the pond, where there were twenty fellows at least going one after another down the long slide. I must say I was rather sorry to go by, and thought that Mrs. Cheviot might have done very well without us; but I was glad when we got home and went into the great kitchen, where Mrs. Cheviot was just putting the huge piece of beef on a dish, and Polly was looking into the steaming copper ready to hoist out the puddings: for really I don't know how they would have done without us, for there was such a lot to do. A bent-up old chap came tottering up to the back-door as we came into the kitchen, and he was the first of the party, which soon gathered round the door with basins and smiling faces, and many thanks and courtesies. Frank wanted to cut the beef, but Mrs. Cheviot would not agree to that, but set him to cut hunches of pudding in the back-kitchen with Polly, while I reigned supreme over a great big saucepan full of potatoes, and had to fish out two big, steaming fellows, to add to each basin of beef and gravy. As for Bertie, Mrs. Cheviot said she 'never did see such a handy young gent—no, never! she only wished the girls were more like him: but there! they were always so giddy, and had no more head than a pin;' which was said with a cutting glance into the back-kitchen at Polly, who received it with a giggle, caused by a sly poke from Frank. Bertie's great handiness was shown over putting the basins into the oven to warm them, and taking them out again, and ladling out spoonfuls of gravy; and he got very hot in the face and dirty in the operation. As for Frank, he was a perfect tinker, and I began laughing at him about it, and found out that I was quite as bad.

'Oh, come now,' he said; 'it's a case of the pot and the kettle; look at home!'

The old people were greatly pleased with their dinners, and there was a lot of courtesying and pulling at locks of hair, and 'Duty to the Colonel, and a happy Christmas to him, and many of them; and the same to the young gents: bless their merry hearts!' And then they all went tottering off with their basins, leaving a smell of beef and pudding in the air behind them as they went, which made us feel more hungry than we were before, and made us feel that it was high time for dinner.

And just then the Colonel came in, and by the time we had got the black off our faces and hands our own dinner was ready, and I hope the old men and women enjoyed their beef and pudding as much as we did ours. We were not long over our dinner, and we agreed to put off peeling oranges and roasting our chestnuts till the evening, for daylight was precious, and the days are none too long at Christmas.

I think the Colonel was more inclined to have a toast by the fire than to turn out again into the frost, but he saw how impatient we all were to be off to the ice, and how our eyes kept turning to the new skates on the side-board. Yes, even Bertie, who was not often impatient about anything! So the kind old Colonel began putting on his big rough coat, as if he were as anxious to put on his skates as we were, and he was soon ready to start. We did not go to the pond near the church, but to a larger piece of water called Sherlake, on the road to the station. We found we had the ice all to ourselves, as Sherlake is some way from the village, so the boys do not collect there; and I, for one, was very glad, for, in spite of all our talk as we came along the road of all the fine things we were going to do, I had serious misgivings when we came in sight of the smooth ice, with scarcely a scratch on it. We borrowed a chair from a cottage near, and were soon hard at work with gimlets on one another's heels. Frank was ready to start first, and he looked so ridiculous that Bertie and I could not help laughing at him, though we soon found by experience that it was no laughing matter. The Colonel put on his skates, and went off as smoothly and easily as possible, after a few hints to us.

'Don't be afraid of tumbling down,' he said: 'you're sure to do that, and you'll never learn without a few falls. I'll leave you to find your feet a little, and come back in ten minutes or so to see if you are perfect in the figure eight.'

It did not seem much like the figure eight or any other figure at first. I never felt so helpless in my life; my legs seemed bent on going in different directions, without consulting either my head or my body. I clutched at the solitary chair, refusing to let either Frank or Bertie come near, though they were quite as helpless as I was. Bertie had the Colonel's walking-stick, and managed to keep on his feet sometimes with its help, while Frank floundered about without anything, and was generally in a sitting position on the ice. It was a very serious business at first, as one felt that even a word or a smile might upset one's balance; but when we kept going down like nine-pins, one after another, and sometimes all together, it was too ridiculous, and we all laughed till our sides ached: and the more we fell down the more we laughed, and I don't know who fell down oftenest or laughed the most. When the Colonel came back, Bertie and I were trying to pull

Christmas Dinners for the Old People.

Frank up after a tremendous cropper, and were only rewarded by being both pulled down on the top of him, and the Colonel came to the rescue and set us on our skates again. We got on first-rate after that, when the Colonel gave us his hand; and by the time the early dusk began to fall we had begun to feel that it was not quite impossible to keep upright. We were very loth to take off our skates when the Colonel said it was time to go home, and I tried to persuade him to let us have just ten minutes more, but he would not consent.

'No, my young soldier; you must obey your commanding officer's orders, and be as ready when he says "Halt!" as when he says "Charge!" Didn't you hear the bugle sound the retreat? Soldiers don't stop to argue the point, and say they would rather go on: to hear is to obey.'

(To be continued.)

DANGER AND DELIVERANCE.

JACOB HANSER, a merchant, on one of his commercial journeys arrived late one evening at an inn, which lay in the midst of wooded mountains. It was at that time, just at the close of a long war, unsafe almost everywhere on the highroads, but especially in that part of the country, which was a place of meeting for suspicious characters and bands of robbers. Hanser was travelling in the company of two other men, so feeling that they were three, and trusting especially to God's protection and assistance, they would rather risk spending the night in this remote and very suspicious-looking house than face the cold autumn rain in the dark forest so late at night. Besides, they were so tired with walking along this bad road, that their feet could scarcely carry them.

As soon as they entered the house our three travellers remarked that they had every reason to fear the worst, and to be on their guard. Reluctantly and with the greatest rudeness the people of the inn brought them the bread and drink they asked for on half-broken and dirty earthenware, pointed them to seats at the uncleanly table close to the broken window, on chairs which had formerly belonged to some wealthy household, but which were now so torn and hacked about that they looked as if the wild fellows in their rage had not even spared the furniture. The weary travellers asked to be shown to a bedroom. They were led to a garret, which was so ruinous and so dirty that it did not look as if it had ever been meant for a human abode. On straw spread on the floor the guests were to repose.

Now that the three were alone, Jacob Hanser told his companions his fears and anxieties, and fastened with their help, as far as was possible, the rickety and insecure door. His companions thought that this being done they would now be safe enough, and lying quietly down upon the straw they soon fell asleep, owing to their great fatigue. Jacob Hanser fervently prayed for preservation and help, and then lay down in faith and comfort by the side of his companions. But he cannot sleep, and every desire to slumber quite passed away from him; when at midnight he heard the noise of freshly arrived guests, whose wild cries and shouts, as they drank their spirits, soon betrayed that they were no travellers who use the night for rest, but men whose deeds and actions were allied with darkness, and who had left their beds at night when others seek them. More and more arrive; the noise becomes wilder. Then Hanser, who is soon quite convinced that this is no imaginary but a real danger, gets up from his straw bed and kneels down beside it—'Merciful God,' he prays, 'if I am here to die by murderers' hands, Thy will be done. I am a sinful man and deserve punishment. Be Thou ever to me a gracious God and Lord, and accept my soul with pity.'

After he had thus in body and soul resigned himself to God's will, and committed himself to His fatherly hand, feeling thus prepared for everything, his courage was, as he afterwards said, like that of a young lion. 'There are other people to serve here besides myself,' he thought. 'Up, up! you men!' he cried to his companions: 'it is no time for sleeping now, but for waking: fear and danger are at hand!'

The sleeping men got up in terror, and soon believed that there really was danger. From the room below and from the ground-floor this wild host came storming up straight to the garret. The landlord, who was recognised by his rude voice and speech, wanted to burst open the door, but found it bolted and barred from within. Threatening and cursing in a terrible manner, he demanded that it should be opened; but Hanser, in a firm, manly voice, replied that for that night the room belonged to him and to his companions, and that they would not open the door till the morning; then the exertions from without to tear open the door were redoubled, but God strengthened the three so that they were able to frustrate the exertions of those outside. At last the landlord cried out for the axe to be brought him, and with this he would soon make an end of the wretched fellows. Now all human aid was over, for they heard upon the steps the man who was bringing up the axe. Hanser prayed again more fervently for help. And behold, God's help was already at the door! The clear tones of a post-horn and the crack of a whip announce the arrival of a post-chaise, which is about to stop here for a few hours to rest the weary horses, after the bad road they had traversed. An evil conscience is easily terrified. The man with the axe quickly turned back when half-way up the stairs. The angry landlord, who was shouting so loudly, was silent at once, said a few words in a whisper to his companions, and then went down; the rascals soon followed him, and then fled secretly out at the back-door.

The three terrified men were saved by the arrival of the well-armed strangers; at dawn of day, with hearts and mouths full of praise and gratitude, they hastened out of the suspicious and dangerous wood. J.F.C.

A NOBLE EXAMPLE.

SIR JOSIAH MASON, of Birmingham, who has founded and endowed a large Orphanage, is now founding a College for Technical Education. He lately described his own rise and progress in the following terms:—

At Kidderminster, as a youth, he worked at a variety of trades—baking, shop-keeping, carpet-weaving, and others. When he came to Birmingham in his twentieth year, he was first connected with the gilt-toy trade, and it was not till after ten years of hard work and heavy disappointment that he found the position for which Providence had designed him. At thirty years of age, with 20*l.* of savings as his whole fortune, he was brought into association with Mr. S. Harrison, the inventor of split rings, whom he served for a time, and to whose business, on his retirement, he succeeded. To this he afterwards added the trade of steel-pen making, and he has developed the works into the largest pen-factory in the world. The building in which his pens are now made does not belong to him, but has been conveyed to the trustees of the College, as part of the endowment, so that he is now the tenant of his own foundation. He was associated with Mr. Elkington in the business of electro-plating, and also in copper works in South Wales. He now confines himself to the pen and split-ring trade. He mentioned these facts to show how his wealth had been acquired, and also to show how natural it was that he should wish to promote scientific teaching, the need of which he had so much felt in his early days. But he had first another work to do. He had always desired to do some deed of love for the poor and helpless, and therefore his first care was to provide for the aged and for orphans. That being done, he at last saw his way to the founding of his long-desired College.

AN HOUR WITH THE CAPTAIN.

THE captain, a white-haired, kindly old man, who, I have noticed, always smiles upon little children, and speaks lovingly to them, has just spent an hour with me. How I wished for you all! You would certainly have liked it as well as your geography lesson, to hear him tell about his voyages on the great oceans, years ago. He talks as easily about Spain, and Patagonia, and China, and monkeys, and oranges, and bananas, as you do about home, and rabbits, and chestnuts.

One day, when his vessel was sailing in search of whales, he came to an island that he had never visited before, and which he could not find on any of the ship's charts. The sailors cast anchor close by, and presently some of the natives came alongside in a canoe, and they were invited on board. They were very black, with closely curled hair, but with Roman noses and thin lips. The captain ordered a quantity of ship-bread to be brought up on deck for them, and a mess-kid, a vessel the sailors use for soup, filled with molasses. The visitors seemed to think this a delightful feast, and how do you think their leader expressed their thanks? With his hands and face all smeared with molasses, he seized the captain by the shoulders and rubbed noses with him—their sign of friendly feeling! The sailors thought this a very good joke upon their captain. Before the black men left their ship, the captain took them to a barrel of sand, and with a handful of corn he showed them how farmers plant corn; and with motions of his hands (for they could not understand each other's language) he taught them as much as he could about its growth. He had the blacksmith to make tools for them, and he gave them corn to take ashore with them. Some of the officers of the ship laughed at the captain for taking so much pains to teach them; but a few months after, when they came back to this island, the first thing that was thrown aboard the ship was a bundle of green corn that the natives had grown! Wasn't this a great deal better than to teach them to drink whisky?

He told me a story about a monkey. The captain of another ship had a monkey on board. One day he left his gold watch and chain in his cabin, and this mischievous passenger stole into the cabin, seized the watch and chain, and to the captain's dismay, he ran with them up the rigging and out on the topsail yard. One sailor went cautiously after him, hoping to coax him to give up the valuable things, but when the sailor came near he would roguishly threaten to drop them, and then laugh as if it was the best joke in the world. At last the captain's patience gave way, and he sent another sailor to the rescue, but just as they were ready to seize him, the monkey reached out his arm, opened his paw, and down went the watch and chain into the depths of the ocean. That captain never loved monkeys afterwards!

THE SPARROWS' PETITION.

GOOD people all of Brunswick Square,
Pray listen to your sparrows' prayer,
And have the kindness to remember,
That in this cold and bleak December,
Although we search the garden round,
There's really nothing to be found!
And so, now frosty winter comes,
We pray you throw us out some crumbs.

My family, and all my mates,
Were mostly hatched beneath your slates,
And though we nestle all together,
It's precious cold, this frosty weather;
And while you shovel on your coals
We all are shivering in our holes;
And so, when chilly winter comes,
We pray you throw us out some crumbs.

You should remember, kindly too,
The good we in the summer do,
In killing vermin, which would spare
Nor leaf nor flower in your square;
Destroy the grass, and spoil the garden
For croquet, and for Dolly Varden,
And natty beau, who constant comes:
So, kindly, throw us out some crumbs.

You cannot think what flights and hops
It takes to fill our empty crops;
And then those nasty, sneaking cats!
Instead of hunting mice or rats,
About the garden prowl all day,
To make us starving birds their prey!
So now, when frosty winter comes,
We pray you throw us out some crumbs.

Some farmers make a face forlorn,
And say the sparrows eat their corn;
But let the caterpillars say
The thousands that we take each day,
Which of their fruit would make an end.
So, surely, we're the farmer's friend!
And all their wives, when winter comes,
Should throw the sparrows out some crumbs.

Remember, too, the kind record
Of sparrows by your blessed Lord!
And if God kindly thinks of them,
Well may they claim the care of men!
The monarch and the sparrow share
The Great Creator's constant care;
So think of Him when Christmas comes,
And in His name throw out your crumbs.

WILLIAM CARR.

ANSWER TO RIDDLE (*p.* 23.)

Cod.

THE head (C) cut off leaves 'od'(d), odd; the tail (D) cut off leaves 'co,' the short for Company; both head and tail cut off leave 'nothing.' The head cut off is C, the sea; the tail cut off is D, the Dee; Cod-*sounds* are reckoned a great dainty.

The Sparrows' Petition.

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Chatterbox.

A Sea-faring Dog.

A SEA-FARING DOG.

FAN was the property of a gentleman in the same office with me, but from some cause, he gave her to the owner of one of the far-famed Yarmouth Smacks. Fan, however, retains a strong affection for her late master, and shows it thus:

She goes to sea in the smack whenever it sails, but the moment its prow again touches the landing-stage after a fishing-voyage on the German Ocean Fan quickly gets on shore, and trots off to her late owner's residence in Southtown; there she taps at the door and barks, as much as to say, 'Here I am, safe and sound once more; let me in;' and if the return happens to be early in the morning, she always tries to go up into the bedroom to see her friend.

No sooner, however, is the smack ready for sea again, than the sailors (who would not like to lose her) see her well-known form coming aboard, just as if she were one of the regular crew; which, in fact, she is.

She always barks at the approach of any other craft in the dark, being able to detect the fact some time before even the fishermen themselves.

I patted her, and shook hands with both paws turn about the other evening in my office; but Fan is now again out on the stormy sea, and as I hear the howling of the gale, which is blowing as I write, I pray God may preserve good, faithful Fan, and the hardy men whom He has given her the instinct to serve so well.

G. U.

HALT!

(*Continued from page* 28.)

AS we went home, Frank and I were on in front together, and I began talking to him of what I had been thinking of all the Colonel had said the night before about soldiers and obedience, for I was rather afraid to say out all that I thought to the Colonel. 'It seems such a tame sort of thing,' I said, 'if a fellow only does just what he's told; he might just as well be a chessman moved about on the board without any will of his own. You don't read anything about obedience in Achilles, or Ajax, or any of those old swells in Homer; they were just brave, and that was enough.'

'Well,' said Frank, rather puzzled, 'they seemed to fight in a queer sort of way then. But Uncle Will says that it would never do to have an army of Ajaxes; and besides he says, don't you know, that it's often the greatest trial to courage to be obedient. Of course, if every one did what they thought was bravest and best, they would all be running hither and thither, and it would not be much good to have generals at all. He says that very often in a battle some of the soldiers never strike a blow, and yet the battle could not be won without them. Perhaps there's a regiment drawn up on a hill-side, and it never stirs all day; but if they had not been there, the enemy would have come and attacked the men who were really fighting in the rear. Why, he told me a case that happened in the Indian war. It was a question about booty or something, and it was tried in the courts to see how it ought to be divided. There were three divisions who laid claim to a share; the first division had taken the town and got the treasure, the second came up when it was all over, and the third never came near the place, but was more than 50 miles away.'

I laughed. 'I don't see why there need have been any question about it; it was check of the 2nd and 3rd divisions to ask for a share.'

'But they got it,' said Frank: 'the first division would have been afraid to march on the town if it had not known that the second was just behind, ready to come to its help; and they neither of them could have advanced safely if the third had not been keeping the country quiet and the natives in check.'

I was silenced, but not convinced, and Frank went on, repeating pretty well word for word what the Colonel had said to him. 'That's a great idea of Uncle Will's, that of being as ready to halt as to march. He says he has known such a lot of bother from headstrong young fellows, who want to rush straight into the cannon's mouth.'

'Well!' I said, rather indignantly, 'I suppose if the captain told his men to run away, it would be brave and right of them to do so.'

The Colonel and Bertie overtook us just then, and the Colonel overheard my last words, and answered them, 'Quite right, Tom; and if I saw any of my men taking their own way, and thinking it better to advance when I ordered retreat, or march when I said "Halt," I should pretty soon take steps to teach them what a soldier's first duty is.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE next few days passed away wonderfully quick, so that I could scarcely believe we had been at the Hermitage a week when Bertie reminded me of it. It was the jolliest place to stop at that you can imagine. One never felt dull for a single minute, or at a loss what to do, for our time was always filled up from morning till night. Of course, skating was the principal amusement, but there were lots besides; rabbit-shooting, with the Colonel and East the keeper, which Frank and I liked, as we used to be allowed to fire the Colonel's gun now and then. I had never fired off a gun before in my life; and the first time I did it I was not quite sure, for a minute, that I had not killed myself, what with the noise and smoke and the kick of the gun. Neither Frank nor I gave the rabbits much cause for alarm, though Frank declared that he wounded a rabbit once; but as it got clear off without leaving a spot of blood behind, I always felt it was doubtful, especially as he confessed that he had shut his eyes when he fired. Bertie preferred to stop at home with Mrs. Cheviot when we went out rabbiting, as he could not bear

to see anything killed; and he and Mrs. Cheviot got great friends, and she said there wasn't such another young gent nowhere as Master Bertie.

Then there was wood-cutting, which Bertie liked as well as Frank and I did. They were cutting down a bit of wood not far from the Colonel's house, and we soon made friends with the two men at work there, and worked pretty nearly as hard as they did, when we could get hold of an axe. We used to fancy we were in the backwoods in America, and were making a clearing to build a log-hut; and we used to pile up the fagots so as to leave a hole in the middle where one could creep in, and fancy that the whole place was swarming with Red Indians or wild beasts, though the only creatures we ever met with were gorgeous sleek pheasants, who flew up clumsily with a whirr of their heavy wings, and a loud 'cluck, cluck, cluck,' when they saw us; or little brown rabbits, that glanced at us and then scuttled away down into their holes, with a whisk of their little white tails. Even without any play the work itself was jolly, chopping away at young saplings and branches, clearing away right and left, with a crash, and a crackle, and a fall, and then binding up the wood into bundles according to its size. There were some bigger trees to come down, and branches to be lopped off; and Frank and I got plenty of climbing. I used to feel rather sorry for the big trees, if they could feel, when the axe went chopping into their trunks, and the saw worked its way in so gradually; and then, when we were all pulling away at the rope to bring it down, it seemed to use all its strength to resist and keep its head up among the heads of the other trees, tossing its little branches up towards the sky; and when at last it yielded, coming down with such a slow, despairing sort of crash, crushing down through the underwood, till it rested among the dry leaves and ferns. It always reminded me of Nebuchadnezzar driven out from 'this great Babylon,' to be among the beasts of the field, and to be wet with the dew of heaven; and I felt it was like triumphing over fallen greatness when we jumped upon the boughs, and chopped away the upper branches. The two men who were at work there, Booth and Roberts, let us do very much as we liked, though we must have hindered them a good deal more than we helped.

The Colonel had to go into Medington on business one day, so we were left to our own devices, and we persuaded Mrs. Cheviot to let us have our lunch to take out with us, for we always dined late, except on Christmas Day. So Mrs. Cheviot packed a basket for us—a good large tin of peasoup and three basins, a lot of potatoes, and some bread and salt. We were rather ambitious in our ideas as to what we would cook, and I was strongly in favour of rashers of bacon, and Frank of beefsteak, and Bertie of eggs; but Mrs. Cheviot persuaded us to be content with warming the soup and roasting the potatoes in the embers, and we were so successful that we made up our minds to something more extensive another time. But another time did not occur, for the men had nearly finished their work, and the fagots were all piled into heaps ready for carting away; and there was only another day's work to be done before they went off to another job. We went down to the wood the last morning, but we were not to stop long, for young Campbell from the Rectory was coming to Sherlake with us in the afternoon for a regular good go at skating; and the Colonel promised to come to the wood and look us up at lunch-time, as we were apt to forget how time was going when we got interested in anything; and it was a good thing for Booth that he had settled to do this, as it turned out.

There was one more tree that needed lopping; it was not to be cut down, only to be lopped, which always seemed to me to be adding insult to injury; they always look so naked and lanky with their lower branches cut off, and only a little tuft at the top, like the old woman who had her petticoats cut short in her sleep. Frank had persuaded Roberts to let him go up the tree instead of him, and was astride on one of the higher branches, shouting for the axe to be handed up to him. Roberts stood on the ladder underneath, and Booth was just below. Frank was not quite within reaching distance, and as Roberts stretched up towards him, with the axe, it somehow fell from his hand and went down, striking, as it fell, against Booth's leg above the knee, for he had got one foot on the ladder to steady it. I was so busy watching Frank up in the fork of the tree that I scarcely noticed the axe fall, and indeed, it had so often before fallen about without doing any harm, that if I had noticed it I should hardly have thought of anything amiss; but Booth gave a cry and dropped back against the tree, and then down on the heap of small branches at the foot of the trunk. Even then I did not feel frightened till I saw a stream of blood running down his corduroy trousers, among the dead leaves and twigs, and his face turn a dreadful, pale colour, in spite of the red-tanned skin and the smudge of dirt across his cheeks.

Roberts said, 'Hullo, there! Hullo! What's up now?' and came down the ladder as clumsily and leisurely as if Booth had only scratched his finger. As for Frank, I have a faint remembrance of seeing him come down head foremost, and saving himself by catching at a branch and the ladder; but I was too much taken up with Booth's dreadful look to take much notice of anything else, and Frank afterwards said he could not a bit remember how he got down, unless he flew or fell. I caught a glimpse at Bertie behind Booth with a face as white as a sheet, and then he rushed off, and I thought he had gone away, because he gets so sick at the sight of blood; but it was not that. He is always quicker to think what is to be done than any one, and he knew the Colonel would be on his way, and he ran to meet him and hasten him. He must soon have met him, for a few minutes after we heard his step coming, striding through the bushes; and oh! what a relief it was! Roberts was trying to tie something round the great gaping wound that seemed draining Booth's life away, and making his eyes dim and his lips white, but with very little effect.

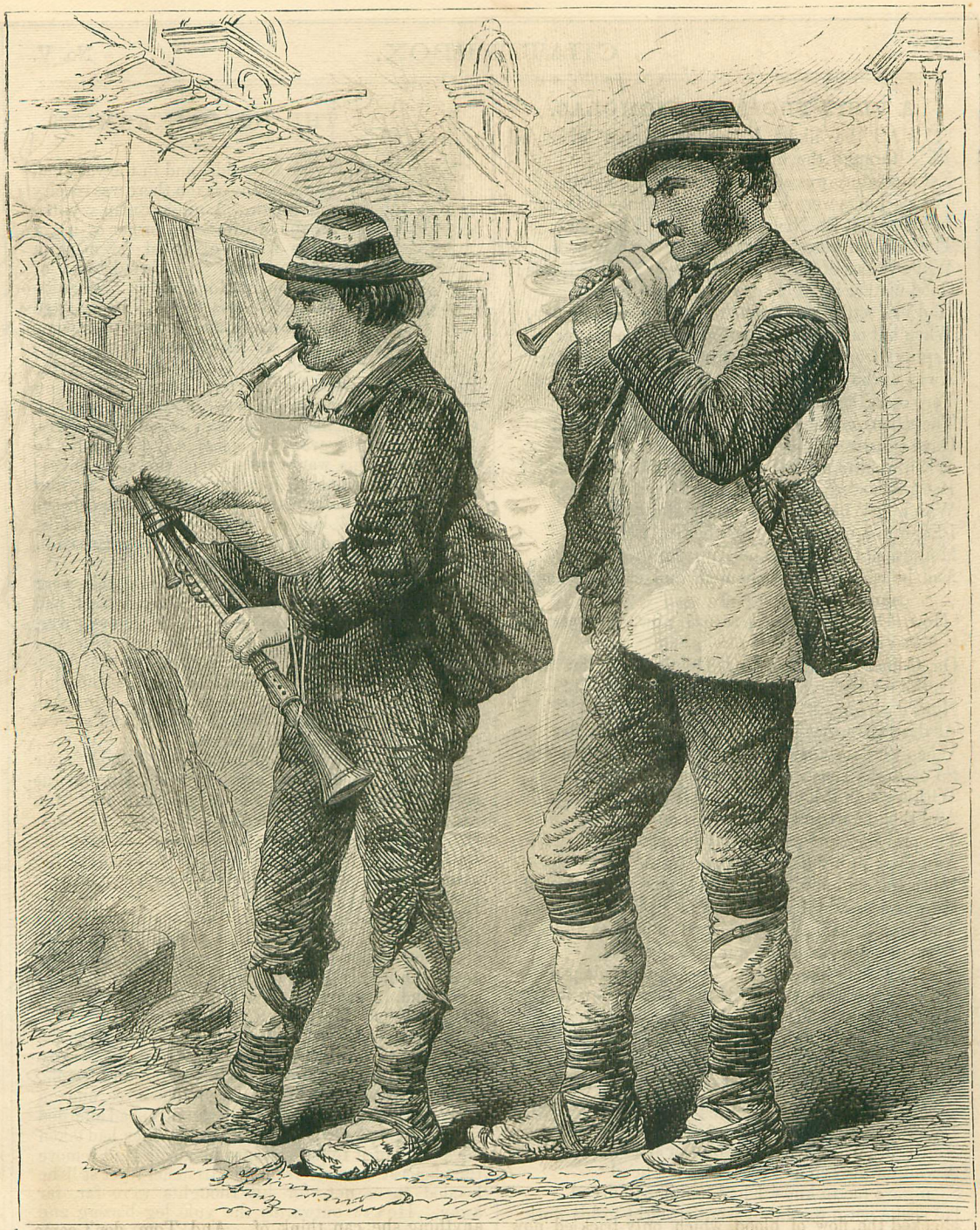
The Colonel seemed at no loss what to do; he tied his silk handkerchief as tight as he could draw it round the leg above the cut, and pulled it with his hands and teeth till I thought it could not be tighter, then he put the handle of his knife into the knot and twisted it round and round so as to tighten the bandage till the pressure must have been very painful; but it

checked the flow of blood, which only trickled now instead of pouring.

'There we are!' said the Colonel, cheerfully. 'Come, my man, keep up your heart; we'll have you home and in bed, and the doctor will soon set you on your legs again, please God. Here, Tom, my boy, off with you like an arrow, and send Giles here, and tell him to bring a rug and a pillow. There's a hurdle over there we can use. And tell Mrs. Cheviot to go straight to Roberts' cottage with linen, and anything she can think of. And, Tom, don't come back here, stop there till I come; I may want to send you somewhere else.'

Off I went as fast as my legs would carry me. There is something about the Colonel that makes one do what he says without thinking, and as I ran I thought to myself, that if obedience were the soldier's first duty, it would be easy enough to obey such a commanding officer.

(To be continued.)



PFIFFERARI.

THESE are the Italian waits, or Christmas-carol singers, who come from their homes in the Abruzzi mountains at Christmas with their bagpipes. You meet them at every corner of the street in the large towns, playing their quaint melodies and old hymns before the image of the Virgin, the little children crowding round to gather what they can of the story of the Babe in its mother's arms; for in a vague way they know the music has something to do with the song of the angels on the first Christmas night. Two Christmases ago there was a great lamentation, for these mountain minstrels were forbidden to come down out of their fastnesses; there was cholera in the large towns, and it was feared that they would carry the infection from place to place in their wanderings.

H. A. F.

London: Printed by JOHN STRANGEWAYS, Castle St. Leicester Sq.

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS.

'TWAS the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring—not even a mouse:
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
Good mother in kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,
When out on the lawn there rose such a clatter,—
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters, and threw up the sash.
The moon, on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a lustre of mid-day to objects below;
When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-deer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick!
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name,—
'Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Dunder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall!
Now, dash away! dash away! dash away all!'
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle mount to the sky,
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With a sleigh full of toys—and St. Nicholas too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.
His eyes how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow:
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.
He was chubby and plump—a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
'Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!'

REV. CLEMENT C. MOORE.

THE GOLDEN ARMLET.

IT was Yule-tide, and in the vast hall of Segur the Saxon there was revelry and mirth. A mighty man was the Thane of Branston, owner of broad lands which extended for many a league round the tiny hamlet of Whitby, in Northumbria. His vassals and serfs were to be counted by the score, and he kept up a pomp and state second only to the king; for Alfred, surnamed the Great, then ruled the land. Others besides his own countrymen knew this northern warrior; he was the sworn enemy of the pirate Norsemen, or, as they called themselves, Danes, who still ravaged the shores of England. In the summer his war-vessels swept the seas, having many a sharp tussle with their cunning foes; but now that winter had come with its storms and bitter cold the galleys were all laid up in creek and cove, whilst Thane Segur and his followers held high revel in Branston Hall.

Christmas, or Yule-tide, had set in this year severely. For many weeks a hard, black frost, had cast iron fetters about the earth, so that marsh, river, and stream were blocked and covered with ice. There was no chasing of the roebuck or wild bear, no outdoor sports or pastimes to beguile the dull days. So, within doors, the men at arms grumbled, diced, and quarrelled till daylight waned, and supper, the grand event of the day, began.

'A right merry stave, and well sung!' said Segur the Saxon, as the last notes of a drinking-chorus ceased. Then, taking off a heavy golden armlet from his wrist, he threw it on the table, saying, 'Now, sirs, behold the guerdon for him who can sing the best lay, or chant the blithest ditty, amongst the company here present. This shall he win and wear in all favour, be he gentle or serf."

Then were the lists of this tourney of song open to all; and the fair Lady Ella, their chieftain's only child and spoilt darling, was chosen umpire. Then did each man do his best, one singing of love, another of wine, and a third of prowess in the battle-field, so the harp travelled slowly down the long table.

At the very bottom of the board, below even the grooms and scullions, sat a youth, who might have seen some twelve summers. He was fair and fragile, with a dreamy look in his large blue eyes, and an absent manner that throughout the meal had afforded no small amusement to his fellows. They had taken advantage of it to put salt into his drink, and remove the choicest morsels from his trencher; yet still he heeded them not, for his thoughts were far, far away. He saw outwardly the yule log blazing and glowing red in the open hearth, the lighted vessels of oil flickering on the rough oak table, where their grey-haired chieftain sat, flanked on either side by the long line of servitors; but in the youth's mind was present a very different scene—a peaceful home in a distant country, himself the petted heir of the noble house of Oswald, his training in all knightly exercises by his father, and merry sports and games with his beautiful sister Hilda.

Then came a day when, after supper, the harp, as now, passed from hand to hand; a messenger rushed in, crying 'that their foemen, the Danes, were approaching.' He had seen the strong men as they rose hastily from the feast, and, headed by his father, rushed forth to meet the enemy. From without there came the clamour and din of battle, the clash of arms, the tread of many feet, whilst ever and anon above all this tumult sounded the war-cry of the house of Oswald. Within-doors the women wept and prayed, his mother holding him, her ten-year old son, fast, lest he too should go out and join in the fray.

Thus they waited in the dim hall till his father, wounded and bleeding, staggered in and fell on the threshold, saying that all was lost, their foes being as three to one against them. Raising himself with a mighty effort, the dying warrior moved to where his daughter, his lovely, darling Hilda, knelt praying for victory. For an instant he kissed and held her to him, then lifting his dagger he plunged it deep into her heart, murmuring, 'Better to die thus, my child, with a prayer on thy lips, than live to be a Danish captive.' He turned to do the same by his wife and little son, but strength failed him, and he fell lifeless just as the foemen entered. The Danes plundered and set fire to the house, then went away, leaving the 'wolf's cub,' as they called the boy Oswald, alone with his mother amidst the burning pile.

Not dead, but stunned, the lad awoke to feel the night-rain beating on his face, to hear his mother sobbing beside him; whilst afar off a few embers, gleaming through the darkness, were all that now remained to them of house and home.

Two years of toil and privation had passed since then, and now he, the last of a noble family, sat amongst the menials at the Thane of Branston's board, wearing the coarse dress of a neat-herd. Still the golden circlet gleamed and sparkled, and the tourney of song went on, whilst Oswald lived in pain and sorrow with the Past.

At last the harp was handed to him, his companions in mockery saying, 'Now, dullard, give us some of thy clever conceits; for sure thou wilt gain the prize an thy song be as bright as thy looks.' Then the boy took the instrument and tried to sing, but voice failed him. Burning thoughts were in his heart; yet when he struggled to give utterance to his wrongs, his lips only made a half-articulate moan, his hand only struck discord from the strings. He was dumb, voiceless with grief and shame.

At that moment two figures seemed to stand before him. One was as a tall knight in black mail, fierce and strong, who, holding out the golden armlet to the lad, said, 'Vengeance and renown, all things shall be thine, if thou wilt forswear thy Maker and serve only me.' The other wore the white spotless garb in which a young warrior used then to watch beside his armour on the eve of his knighthood. His face was fair and meek as he firmly clasped the cross on the hilt of his sword, and whispered, 'Wait with patience!'

For a moment Oswald stretched out his hand for the glittering prize, willing to give himself to the spirit of evil, if only the power of song might be his. Then the thought of his mother praying for him, perchance even now, rose in his mind, and his arm fell, and he turned away. So the vision faded away, leaving only the crowd of bearded faces mocking his pain and sorrow.

Stung almost to madness by their contempt, the boy let fall the harp, and sprang up to leave the hall. 'Thou must sing, though thy voice be no sweeter than the chough in spring-time,' said the men beside him, striving to detain their victim. But he broke from them, and made for the door. 'He flies like a beaten hound!' they cried; and one of them caught up the whip used by the neat-herd for driving his cattle, and laid it freely over the lad's shoulders as he passed.

At the first cut of the lash all Oswald's dumb misery and voiceless longing left him in a moment, and he turned full of bitter scorn upon his persecutors. 'I will sing!' he cried, going back again to the table, and taking up the harp. Full of passion his hand swept the strings, giving to them somewhat of the tumult and strife of his own soul. Men paused and listened, whilst down the long board fell silence as the first notes of the clear, boyish voice, sounded through old Branston Hall.

How Oswald sang that night he knew not. Words came unbidden to his lips, skill unwonted came to his fingers. He was for the time a bard, gifted with a living, breathing power of song. The rude natures around swayed and bent before it, and when his lay was finished many a one started to his feet and swore the boy should be avenged. But the singer, when they looked to praise him, to hail him victor in the tourney of song, owner of its golden prize, he had passed from them. Through the portals where sorrow comes not, where broken hearts are healed, he had entered. Only in the arms of those who had scourged and tormented him rested the form of the minstrel who had given his life for his song. His heart was broken, and with it the slender thread of life upon which the burden of suffering had passed so heavily.

The next day with all honours, like unto the Thane of Branston's own son, the young chief was carried to his rest. The black frost, which for weeks had fettered the earth, was over, and Nature was awakened from her long sleep. Spring was coming, and in a few weeks the war-galleys of Segur the Saxon would leave their winter-quarters for the Danish coast. Ere they sail, however, on their northern voyage, a golden armlet was seen nailed to the mast-head of the leading vessel—a token that the wrongs of the house of Oswald were not long to remain unavenged.

J. Walker.

A RIDDLE.

By Dean Swift.

WE are little airy creatures,
All of different voice and features:
One of us in *glass* is set,
One of us you'll find in *jet;*
T'other you may see in *tin,*
And the fourth a *box* within;
If the fifth you should pursue,
It can never fly from *you.*

Answer—The vowels.

"How Oswald sang that night he knew not."

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Chatterbox.

The Young Monkey. By Harrison Weir.

THE YOUNG MONKEY.

A LITTLE Monkey chanced to find
A walnut in its outward rind;
He snatched the prize with eager haste,
And bit it, but its bitter taste
Soon made him throw the fruit away.
'I've heard,' he cried, 'my mother say
(But she was wrong), the fruit was good:
Preserve me from such bitter food!'
A Monkey, by experience taught,
The falling prize with pleasure caught;
Took off the husk, and broke the shell,
The kernel peeled, and liked it well.
'Walnuts,' said he, 'are good and sweet,
But must be opened ere you eat.'
And thus in life you'll always find
Labour comes first,—reward behind.

HALT!

(*Continued from page 36.*)

CHAPTER VII.

IT was not far from the wood to the house—not more than a quarter of an hour's walk, and not half that to run; but as I went an idea came into my head which made me alter my intention. I knew that the nearest doctor was Mr. Baker at Bargrave, three miles distant; he was the parish doctor, and I had often seen him driving about the village in his little pony-carriage with a white pony, and it was he who attended Bertie when he had brain fever at Oatlands Farm. Colonel Morris said the doctor must be fetched, but he had not said who had better go for him. Perhaps he meant to send me when he came home, for he said he might want me again. Then it would save time if I went straight on at once, for, of course, the sooner the doctor came the better, and I could run as fast as any one. I thought I had better deliver my message to Giles and Mrs. Cheviot, and then set off to Bargrave; but as I came out of the fields on to the high road I saw a little boy, and thought I might save time and distance by sending the message by him, and going straight on. He seemed rather stupid, and scratched his head and opened his mouth when I first spoke to him; but it appeared that he 'knowed very well where the Colonel lived, he did; and he knowed Mr. Giles as were coachman there; he'd heard tell of Mrs. Cheviot, and he'd go and tell them they was wanted.' I repeated the message three times, and he nodded his head, and said 'he minded,' and 'it was all right;' and I saw him go clumping off towards the Hermitage with his thick-nailed boots, making a clatter on the hard road. Then I set off briskly towards Bargrave, sometimes running, and sometimes walking, and sometimes taking a slide if a piece of ice came in my way, but going on very steadily, and not allowing anything to distract me from my purpose. I passed Sherlake, and did not stop for a minute even to look at the ice; and the railway station, and did not wait to see the express rush past, though it was in sight when I came to the bridge. I got a little slower as I approached Bargrave, for my legs were a little tired; and I was hungry, for it was past lunch-time, and breakfast seemed a long time ago. Mr. Baker's house is in the middle of Bargrave, and I went into the little surgery and found it empty. At the tingle of the bell a girl came out of the inner door, and asked what I wanted.

'Mr. Baker!' I answered; 'he is wanted at once at Silverhill; there has been an accident!'

'At Silverhill!' the girl said; 'why, he's over there! This is one of his regular days for Silverhill. He went over there this morning at ten, and he won't be back for another hour. What part of Silverhill was it?'

'Near Colonel Morris's,' I said.

'Well, he was going close there to see Mrs. Giles, the coachman's wife, who is ill. Why, any one might have told you he was about there! every one knows this is his day. They are sure to have found him long ago, and might have saved you the trouble of a long walk for nothing.'

Then I remembered that I had seen a pony-carriage standing down in the lane near Giles's cottage, but I had not thought it was Mr. Baker's. I was tired, and cross, and hungry, and felt half ready to cry with vexation; but I turned round and went straight out of the surgery, pretending not to hear the girl's invitation to sit down and rest a bit, though I should have been glad of a little rest before starting on my way home. Oh, how long the way seemed! and how cold the wind! It makes such a difference in the length of a road what you see at the end of it. I had seen so much use in my walk to Bargrave—good to Booth, and (I am afraid I thought too of) praise from the Colonel and others for my quickness and thoughtfulness; and the three miles seemed only two, and those very pleasant miles, with a good deal of down-hill, and a bit of ice here and there for a slide, and a young fox-hound who came part of the way with me in a very friendly way, and an Irish beggar who would talk to me, and make me laugh, and reminded me of Larry by his brogue and the twinkle in his eye. But going back it was uphill, and the wind was in my face, and there seemed no bits of ice for sliding, even if I had cared to do it, except one, where I stumbled and came down hard on my hands and knees; a fierce dog came out of a cottage-garden, and barked at me as if it would have liked a bit out of my leg; and a rude carter slashed at me with his long whip. If it had only seemed two miles walking to Bargrave, it seemed six coming back.

As I came up to the Hermitage gate I heard voices in the garden, and found Frank and Bertie and young Campbell just starting for Sherlake, with their skates in their hands.

'Holla, Tom!' sang out Frank; 'we have been waiting for you such a time! We couldn't think where you had got to!'

I did not feel in any humour for long explanations, and I felt very thankful to the Colonel, who came out just then, saying,—

'You boys had better be off to Sherlake and make the most of the daylight. Tom wants some lunch

first, and perhaps he would rather stop and help me with my gun-cleaning, for I can see that he is tired and not up for much skating this afternoon.'

Bertie whispered something about stopping with me as I passed him, but I shook my head and muttered some sort of cross answer, and they set off without me. In the dining-room the remains of the lunch were still on the table, and the Colonel told me to ring the bell for Mrs. Cheviot was keeping some potatoes and an apple-dumpling hot for me, and then he went into the next room to finish writing a letter.

Mrs. Cheviot came in with the potatoes with what we used to call 'an expression of countenance,' a good deal of colour, and her lips firmly pressed together, so that I could see she was not in the best of tempers; but I wanted so much to hear about Booth, that I paid no attention to the danger-flag, and attacked her on the subject.

'I say, did that boy bring my message all right about Booth?'

'A pretty messenger to choose, I must say!' was the answer. 'Any one might have known, with half an eye, that poor Davy Brown is not all right there; a poor, half-silly creature, as can't be trusted out of his mother's sight! But I don't blame you, but them as should have known better.'

I pushed away the plate of beef, which had seemed so tempting a minute ago: her words seemed to take all my hunger away. She was bustling about at the sideboard with the dish-covers and dirty plates, and making believe that she was going away; but I knew she had a good deal more to say, and meant to say it, and that it was not anything very pleasant.

'What did he say?' I asked.

'Well, he came in, and said as there had been an accident somewheres. He didn't say who it was nor where, and it gave me such a turn as I shan't get over this long time, and Polly were struck all of a heap, for I thought for sure as it were the Colonel, or one of you young gents.'

'Didn't he say anything else?' I asked, knowing how Mrs. Cheviot wandered from the subject generally.

'Yes, Master Tom, he did! I'll give him his due, poor lad; he did his best, poor as it were. He said as how I was to be quick and go off to my master at the wood, which he didn't know where it was; and Giles, he was to be off to Mrs. Roberts' cottage, but whether it were the one near the turnpike or the one by the pond he didn't know no more than the babe unborn, but he was to take a rug with him, and be quick; and he said as how you were gone for the doctor.'

'What did you do?' I asked, feeling more ashamed and wretched every minute.

'Do? Why, I've always been taught to do as I'm told; but I was that put about and confused that I hardly knew what to be after. I set off to try and find the master, and for pretty near an hour I was tearing about, here, there, and everywhere, till I was ready to drop, and he all the time wondering not to find me at Roberts'. As for Giles, as ill luck would have it, he went to the wrong house, and frightened the poor old widow Roberts by the turnpike out of her wits pretty near, through thinking as her son was killed or wounded.'

'Did they get Booth home all right?'

'Yes, they did, thanks to the Colonel, as he is always the one to do things right; but he might have died for any good me or Giles was to him, or you either, Master Tom, tramping over the country after the doctor, as any one might have told you was just round the corner. But it's no use fretting over spilt milk and no harm is done! And get on with your lunch, do now, for you look pretty near as bad as poor Booth, you're that worn out.'

The Colonel came in just then, and Mrs. Cheviot went away, and I pretended to be busy with my lunch, while the Colonel took down one of his guns to examine it, but every mouthful seemed to choke me; and at last the Colonel saw something was wrong, and he put down his gun and came across to me, and put his hand kindly on my shoulder.

'Why, Tom, old chap, what's amiss?'

And then I spluttered out into a great stupid sob that would come.

'I'm so sorry!' I said; 'so sorry!'

'Why are you sorry?'

'If Booth had died because I went off to Bargrave, and did not give the message. But I thought some one must fetch the doctor, and I didn't know——"

'Come, Tom, cheer up! Booth has not died, and is not going to die just yet, and no harm has been done except that you have had a long walk for nothing and missed your skating. You are the worst sufferer! I suppose Mrs. Cheviot has been talking. Poor old lady! she has been a good deal put out, and has taken more exercise than she has had for months, but she will soon be all right again.'

'But how did you manage without Giles?'

'Very well, indeed! Roberts and I carried him on a hurdle, and indeed I don't know that Giles would have been in time to be of any help at the wood. Now, Tom, finish up your beef, and come and help me, for I've a lot of work for you to do.'

When I had had some lunch, and was hard at work with a bit of leather polishing the barrel of a gun, the Colonel said: 'Why, Tom, I thought when you ran off this morning so steadily, directly I spoke, that you had the making of a young soldier in you after all!'

'I did mean to do what you said! I really did!'

'I know you did, Tom; but, after you had gone a little way, you thought you knew better than your officer, and that it was better to advance, quick march, to Bargrave, than to halt when you reached the Hermitage. Well, my boy, we won't hold a court-martial this time! I think you have had a touch of the cat from Mrs. Cheviot's tongue—have not you?'

(To be continued.)

A WINTER'S MORNING SONG.

THE boughs are bare
Of leaf and life,
The biting air
Is like a knife;
Now old King Cold
Lays icy bonds

One hand in Die's,
And one in Kate's,

E'en Gussy flies
Upon his skates;

William Wilberforce.

On field and fold,
  On lakes and ponds:
My merry mates,
  Short is his stay;
On with your skates
  And skim away!

Give Puss the fire
  And easy chair,
We don't desire
  To linger there;
Leave slipper'd Bob
  To lounge away,
With feet on hob,
  His dreary day:
Off to the lake
  O'er crunching snow,
By bush and brake
  We go! we go!

Just look at Ned,
  That dab in skates!
What eagles spread!
  What well-cut eights!
With what a grace
  The skill'd ones wheel!
Tis now a race,
  And now a reel!
They eat—they drink—
  Now, by the Fates!
Those chaps, I think,
  Were born in skates!

Now on the scene
  Doth one appear,
Propp'd up between
  His sisters dear;
One hand in Dic's,
  And one in Kate's,
E'en Gussy flies
  Upon his skates.
He nods at Tom;
  His fingers burn;
Who would not from
  Such teachers learn?

From surly Mike
  His headache flies,
No physic like
  Good exercise;
O'er Whiteface steals
  A ruddy hue,
And all life's wheels
  Seem oiled anew:
'A rainy sky!'
  Sighs little Ben;
'King Frost, good-bye,
  'But come again!'

G. S. O.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

HIS great and good man, whose name is so linked with the abolition of the slave-trade, was born August 24, 1759; he was the son of a wealthy merchant of the same name, residing at Hull.

In 1772 he was sent to St. John's College, Cambridge, where he distinguished himself. He was elected and sat in Parliament for the borough of Hull when only twenty-one years of age.

In 1797 he married the daughter of Mr. Spooner, a wealthy banker of Birmingham. Previous to which he seems to have given up a life of mere amusement and gaiety, and devoted himself to good works. He especially interested himself in protesting against the traffic of the slave-trade, in which he was supported by the Quakers.

On entering Parliament the young member gained the friendship of Mr. Pitt, which he preserved during the long struggle against slavery. Thomas Clarkson, in 1789, proposed a Bill for its abolition. In 1804 the Bill was carried through the House of Commons but thrown out in the House of Lords; the following year it was lost in the Commons.

In 1806 it was moved by Mr. Fox in the House of Commons and carried by a large majority, and was then also adopted by the House of Lords.

Mr. Wilberforce, during his long and useful career, showed himself a steady and consistent supporter of all measures for the benefit of the people. Notwithstanding his love of peace, and the support he received from the Quakers in his wish to abolish slavery, Mr. Wilberforce approved of the principles of the Revolution then passing in France, although he deplored its cruelties.

He was the author of many useful treatises, and wrote *An Apology for the Christian Sabbath*.

He lived much at Broomwood, in the parish of Battersea, in Surrey, and he had a large family, and one of his three sons became the celebrated Samuel, Bishop of Oxford, and afterwards Bishop of Winchester, one of the most notable divines of modern times.

Both the rival parties in Parliament vied with each other in paying tribute to the earnest zeal of William Wilberforce as the advocate of right, truth, and humanity; and no public man died more sincerely regretted than he did.

In helping, as he did, to strike off the fetters from the slave, he had a hard battle to fight against self-interest and prejudice in high places, for many there were whose chief wealth was in their slaves—this was not only in our English possessions but among important nations and peoples abroad; but he fought his battle bravely, and conquered in the end. His health somewhat failed in 1825; but he lingered on till July 29, 1833, when he died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

FRANCOIS CHEVERT.

ON the 2nd of May, 1706, a regiment was passing through the town of Verdun, in France. A boy, with a paper cap on his head pressed down upon his right ear, and playing the castanettes with pieces of broken plates, walked before the regiment, keeping step with them. The soldiers passed through Verdun; the boy still walked on before them.

At the first halt the Colonel, who had remarked the genteel appearance of the little fellow, summoned him before him, and asked him what his intention was by continuing to follow the regiment.

'To become a soldier,' was the reply.

'That is difficult. And your parents?'

'They are dead.'

'How do you live, then?'

'By the charity of some good souls, who give my aunt just enough to feed me.'

'Your name?' inquired the Colonel.

'François Chevert.'

'Well, I will enlist you,' cried the Colonel. 'Now you belong to us.'

This, as we said, took place in 1706.

In 1741 Chevert was a Lieutenant-Colonel, in 1744 Marshal of the Camp, in 1748 Lieutenant-General.

The orphan of Verdun, passing through all the various grades of the army, obtained at last the Grand Cross of St. Louis. He died at Paris in 1769, and was buried in the church of St. Eustache, where the following epitaph to him, composed by the philosopher D'Alembert, can still be read:—

'Without ancestors, without fortune, without support,
An orphan from his infancy,
He entered the service at the age of eleven;
He raised himself, notwithstanding envy, by the force of merit,
And each step was the prize for some brilliant action.
The title of Marshal of France
Was needed not for his glory,
But for the example of those who will take him
As their model.'

J. F. C.

POOR SWALLOWS!

From the French.

IT was the 9th of October, some years ago. We were at our little vineyard of Champ Brancon, under the rock of the citadel. It was early in the morning, and wonderfully fine weather.

However, notwithstanding the beautiful sunshine, I saw some swallows flying close to the ground, and that astonished me very much. We soon saw that they came from all parts; they came from Piémont, they came from Dauphiné, and all met, forming in the air like a cloud above the fort. Then the cloud approached; they alighted close to us, on a large almond-tree which grew at the foot of the ramparts.

I must tell you that every autumn, when the time for departure comes, the swallows are accustomed to assemble upon the old almond-tree, in order to set out all together. The departure hardly ever takes place before the 15th or the 20th of the month. However, although it was now only the 9th October, the swallows were plainly going, and we said to ourselves that the winter was announcing itself early and promising to be severe.

They were not wrong in hastening away. The same evening at sunset we saw them all return, and many others with them. They were so many that they covered half the sky. The snow was pursuing them—a fierce snow which came from the south, from the mountains of Corsica, driven by the wind. The snow came from the south, and that perhaps had never been since the world was made. But it so happened that this year, while looking for the sun, the swallows were to meet the winter.

If you had only seen the poor little black creatures arriving half frozen across the snow! One hears nothing but their cries. It was enough to excite compassion to see them, as they flew here and there in the whirlwinds of snow-flakes, hoping to find shelter.

Half dead with hunger and cold, they came in bands, beating upon the window-panes, upon the chimneys, in the holes in the walls, along the cornices, wherever they could find the least shelter. I saw them by hundreds in clusters upon the edge of the roof, and beating their wings to get warm; as far as the eye could reach, all that was not white with snow was black with swallows.

But what became of the swallows in the snow? The good people opened their doors, then they flew into the houses in great numbers; their extreme misery took away from them all fear of man, and they would allow themselves to be taken up into the hand without stirring. We had our room full. Unfortunately, we did not know how to feed them. If only they would take the grain which we brought for them! But no creatures are more particular as to what they eat, and so all that did not die of cold died of hunger.

Then, when people saw that they died any way, they began to kill them to eat them. People collected them in handfuls, and filled baskets with them; the women brought them in their aprons, and the street-boys in their hats, as they returned from school.

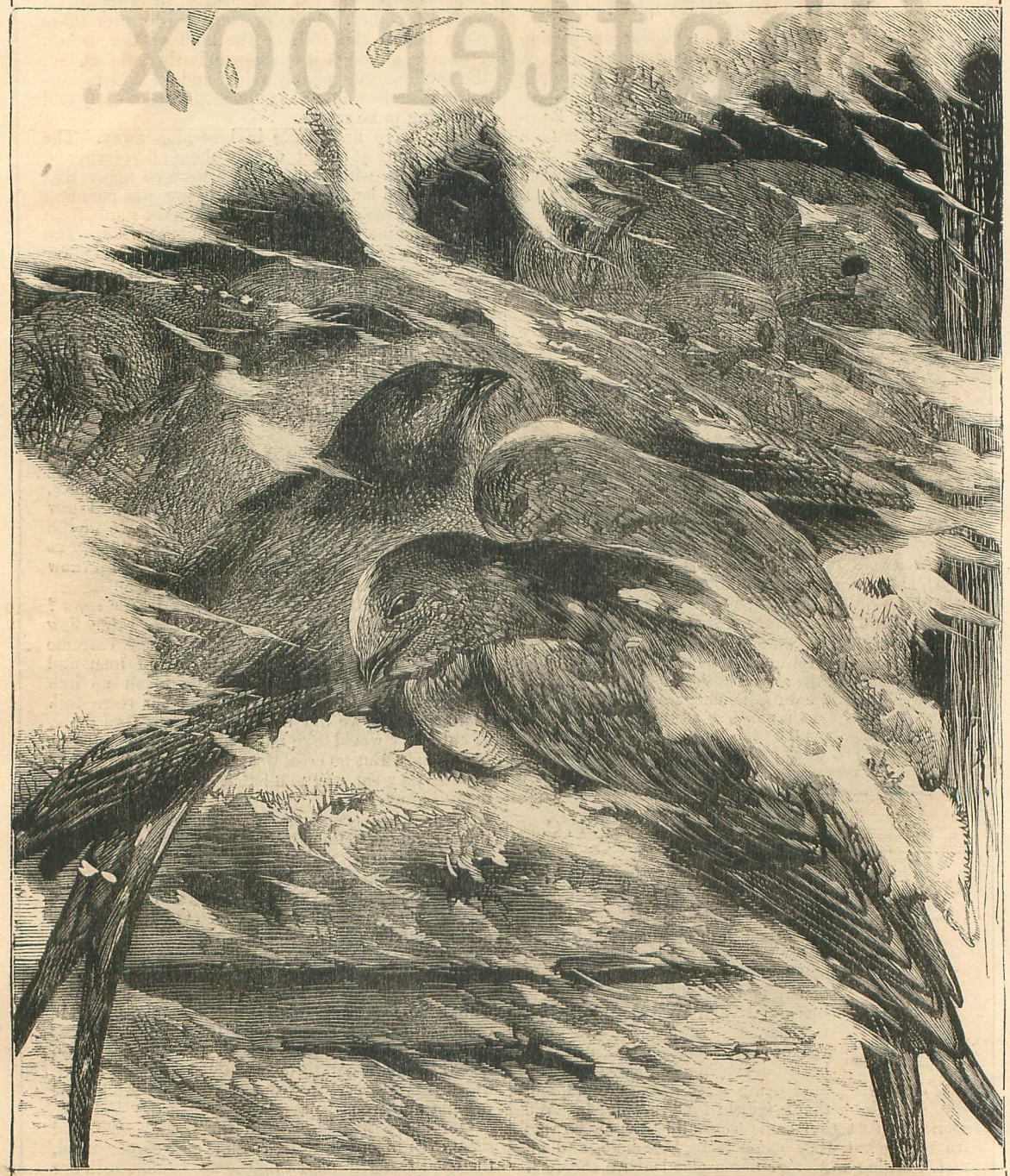
This horror lasted three days. On the morning of the fourth day the sun rose very bright and the snow began to melt, and the vines dried their leaves, in the warm, cheerful sun.

The few swallows who had resisted the terrible winter of four days sounded their note of recall, without holding a council upon the old almond-tree; they quickly departed, one after the other, with all speed, in confusion, to the kindly sea, always warm, which they saw perhaps from above. The band, alas! was not numerous, so many had perished.

Our house was black with them, and we found them even in our drawing-room; and as our maid, the good Roset, gathered up the dead swallows in her apron, with tears in her eyes she said:—

'Oh, my good children, may God preserve us from famine, such as has killed the poor swallows!'

E. H. C.



Poor Swallows. By Harrison Weir.

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Chatterbox.

Mrs. Cheviot on the Ice.

HALT!

(*Continued from page* 43.)

CHAPTER VIII.

THE frost lasted bravely that Christmas, long enough for all three of us to get quite at home on our skates, though we did not learn to do anything very grand, like young Campbell. For my part, I enjoyed going at a tremendous pace right ahead, better than any figures, which seem to me only show-off, and a sort of thing that no fellow would do unless some one was looking on, and thinking how well he skated. At Sherlake there was a good large piece of ice, which was swept every morning, and it was really a stunning bit. At one end of this piece there was a winding stream leading into it, and we could go for nearly a mile along here, though sometimes we had to duck under a willow-tree, and sometimes the dried stumps and dead leaves of the rushes broke up the ice, and made it rough and lumpy; and then, too, the ice was not swept up there, and the snow that had fallen helped to make it rough. I liked going along this stream although it was rough, and Frank and I often went exploring up there, to see how far we could get. We could not go any way on the other side of the broad piece, for there was the bridge which carries the road over the water; and under the bridge was a grating, so that there was no passing under if we had wished to. Near the grating the ice had been broken to fill the ice-house at Sherlake House, and for the swans, who looked much offended at the state of the water, which they no doubt held to be their own domain and viewed us as trespassers. Rags rather took advantage of their forlorn condition, and tried to hustle them; but he found out that they were dangerous, and he kept at a safe distance from their long necks and strong wings.

Talking of the swans reminds me of a riddle that Frank asked me. 'Why is a swan that can't hold up its head like the 12th of January?' 'Because its nex' (neck's) weak.' Stupid, wasn't it?

One day we persuaded Mrs. Cheviot to come down to Sherlake with us to see us skate, and when she was once there we enticed her on the ice, where she walked about like a cat in walnut-shells, giving a little scream now and then when she gave a slip. The Colonel was not down there that afternoon, so we coaxed Mrs. Cheviot to let us give her a ride in a chair, and we fetched one down from the lodge. She held out a good time and said she was 'too old for any such pranks, and she wasn't going to do any such thing.'

However, we showed her how smoothly the chair went on the ice, and we promised not to go very fast, so she let herself be persuaded.

Frank and I pushed the chair behind, while Bertie skated along at the side to encourage her. I really think she liked it at first, and we took her up and down the middle of the broad part gently. We got a little faster after the first turn without meaning it, for we had promised to go slowly, and I am sure we none of us meant to hurt or frighten the old lady the least in the world.

If we had kept to the middle it would have been all right, but Frank suggested that we should take the chair round nearer the bank. Here the ice was rougher, and before we had gone very far the front legs of the chair caught on a branch frozen into the ice; the chair tipped up, and Mrs. Cheviot went flying out, and was sent sliding half-a-dozen yards on her hands and knees, while Frank and I, not able to stop ourselves, went down in a heap over the chair. I am afraid the poor old lady must have been a good deal bruised, and a good deal more shaken and frightened; but there was something so ridiculous about the whole scene that, when Frank and I struggled up to our feet again, we could not help laughing, in spite of ourselves and our own bruises, and Mrs. Cheviot's face, as she sat on the ice looking daggers of indignation at us, while Bertie tried in vain to console her. I am such a duffer about that; I can't for the life of me help laughing if I am once set off, and Frank is much the same, and we did not dare look at one another for the rest of the day for fear of coming cackling out again; and still, all the time, I am sure we were both heartily sorry for the accident, and would have done anything in our power to set matters right. I have never seen the Colonel so angry as he was about that when we got home that evening. I don't think that Mrs. Cheviot meant to tell him about it, but he met her as she was coming limping in, with a great patch of snow on her dress and shawl, and he asked what had happened, and got it all out of her. He thought it was a practical joke, and that we had done it on purpose, and he did look savage when we came in.

'I tell you what it is,' he said, 'I think practical jokes at best are foolish, and often mischievous things, but when they are played on old people and women I think they are ungentlemanly, unmanly, and unchristian too, and I won't have them in my house.'

Then we told how it had happened, and that it was really only an accident, and we were very sorry, and he said he was glad to hear it, for when he thought that we had done it on purpose he was very much inclined to give us a good caning all round; and I think he would have done it, too. As for Mrs. Cheviot, I thought she never would forgive us. The Colonel had made her go off to bed, and ordered himself what she should have for her tea and supper, and he asked after her every time that Polly came into the room, and Polly always said, 'Pretty middlin', thank you, sir, and her leg's not quite so stiff since the rubbing:' though she confided to us in private that she did not believe there was much amiss with the old lady except her temper, 'which were always middlin'.' The whole house smelt of vinegar and brown paper, and Polly fetched out of the medicine-chest a wonderful selection of medicines —all sorts of things that one sees in advertisements; somebody's pills, somebody else's liniment, some peculiar plaster, and some wonderful ointment, till at last the Colonel could scarcely hide a twitch of amusement at the corner of his mouth, under his moustache, and was obliged to cough and look hard

at the fire, so that we might not see him smile, as he thought we had not behaved quite well.

I don't know when Mrs. Cheviot would have forgiven us, only I so nearly came to grief next day on the ice, or rather under it, that it put her own grievance quite out of her kind old head, and we never heard any more about it.

CHAPTER IX.

During those days Booth had been getting on very well, though he was not able to leave his bed yet, and was not likely to be able to walk for some time. We often went down to see him, and have a chat with him, and Bertie used to read to him sometimes, for the time hung very heavily on his hands. Mrs. Roberts had several children, and one of them, a little girl called Nan, especially took our fancy. She was a queer little creature, like a gipsy, with rough, curly, black hair, and eyes as black as my hat. 'There's no keeping that child clean,' Mrs. Roberts used to say; 'she's always been dirty and ragged ever since she were born pretty near, and dirty and ragged she will be to her end. She's not a bit like the others!'

Nan was seven years old, and an idle little dunce, who played truant whenever she could, and followed us about whenever she got the chance. She and Rags were great friends, and appeared to have a secret understanding between them, and Bersiker would let her go right into his kennel when he had a bone, without as much as a growl at the intruder. Mrs. Cheviot had a weakness for Nan too, though she lectured her severely on her naughtiness and dirtiness, and bid her wash her face and go to school with her sister Eliza, who was a 'really good, well-behaved little maid:' but she ended her lecture with a pat on the curly head and a bit of bread and jam, and Nan grinned, and was none the better at any rate for the lecture. She was a plucky little soul and no mistake, up to everything, and only too pleased if we would let her come after us. Why, we took her half way up the spruce-fir on the lawn one day. It is a nasty thing to climb is a spruce-fir, because of all the spiky branches that stick out between the large ones and scratch your face, and poke into your eyes. However, Frank and I went up, and Nan with us. Frank went first, pulling her by her two scratched, brown arms, and I followed, pushing and holding her by the ankles. The Colonel was out, and Mrs. Cheviot did not see, but Polly went into a fit nearly when she heard Nan calling her, and saw her lilac pinafore and black eyes among the branches.

Well, the day after Mrs. Cheviot's adventure we were down at Sherlake, and the Colonel was there too. Frank and I had been up the stream further than we had ever been before, and when we came back we saw Nan sitting on the wall of the bridge, throwing pebbles at the swans. We thought we would try crossing our arms, and making what we call a sedan-chair, and give Nan a ride; she was used to tumbling about, and she never cried or made a fuss when she was hurt like some people. So we shouted to her to make haste and come down, and we would give her a ride, and the curly black head disappeared from the bridge, and a minute after she was running down the snowy slope from the gate to the ice. Now I think I told you, that close by the bridge the ice had been broken to fill the ice-house, and to give the swans a little water. This place was broken every morning, and as it was still freezing hard, by the afternoon a thin coating of ice formed over the hole, of course, yet not strong enough to bear any one. Little Nan came running down to the place; her hat was hanging off behind, and her curls flying in the air. I thought she was coming to the edge, and would then come along the bank towards us; it never occurred to either of us that she would try to make a short cut to us across that thin part of the ice. So we stood and watched her run down to the edge, and then, all at once, a cry broke at the same moment from Frank and me. 'Oh, Nan! stop! not that way!' for we saw her set her foot on the thin crust, no thicker than a card, as fearlessly as if it were the solid three-inch ice on which we were standing. For a second it seemed as if the ice would bear her, and I remembered in that second what a light weight she was when I once had carried her on my back. One second she was there—curly hair, lilac pinafore, laughing face—calling out, 'I'm coming, I'm coming;' and then she was gone, and there was the water oozing and bubbling against the edges of the ice. In that second Frank and I set off towards the place; we have often had skating-races, but I don't think we ever went so fast before or since, and yet it seemed such a long time. Our first cry to stop Nan had attracted the attention of Bertie and the Colonel, and they both saw the accident and our rush to the rescue; and almost as we started I heard the Colonel's voice very loud and commanding, 'Stop where you are, boys! stop, I say! Frank, Tom! stop! you'll only make it worse.'

(To be continued.)

ALICE AND ALEX.

A KINDLY nature, dutifulness, more especially if coupled with an attractive exterior, often pave the way to good fortune in animals as well as in man. The good fortune of an animal is, of course, of a different kind from what we call good fortune in human beings. To become a pet, to be cared for, to be understood, I consider to be good fortune for an animal. The poor hack, who goes miles and miles on the hard, high road, day after day, but who keeps always cheerful, always docile, and who always does his best (although at times he may feel 'put upon'), at last finds his way from being let for hire at some fashionable watering-place into private hands, out of which he will never go, to be abused and over-ridden as before.

My readers will wonder how I intend to get to my illustration, for I talk of horses, and there is a cow! And yet those were the same qualities which made Alex the pet of the foreman—gentleness and a kindly nature. The duty of a cow is to give plenty of milk, to look fat and glossy, to stand quietly when milked, not to

Alice and Alex.

be quarrelsome with other cows, and to show a contented, trusting disposition. All this Alex was. Born of high pedigree, her sixteen or seventeen calves produced a small capital for her master, and at last the honour came that I was to paint her with her last calf. She had been very ill, and the foreman had sat up with her and had nursed her as if she were his child. His own child's name is Alice; and child and cow are great friends. The moment Alice comes from school her first visit is to the old cow, whom she hugs and kisses, and to whom she brings tit-bits.

They are two happy beings, and have very much the same disposition. I like to watch the child and her happy life on that farm, among her ducks and chickens, with her old cat, who patiently allows itself to be dressed in the doll's clothes, and put to bed in the doll's cradle. How pleasant it was to see Alice fast asleep in the evening on her father's lap! It reminded me of the descriptions of English cottage life that I used to read in younger days—decency, happiness, comfort in humble life, with the rough edges taken off to a degree, which one only finds in England.

Alice goes to school, and is quite alive to the advantage of so doing. She is an apt and willing

scholar, eager to learn. Her few chickens and ducks bring in money, some of which buys barley for them; the rest being saved, with any presents she gets, in the savings'-bank. So that by the time Alice grows up she will have a goodly little sum at her disposal, for any outfit she may require, or to pay for anything she may wish to learn, which would be of advantage in the station of life she may be thrown into. Habits of thrift and care are thus given. Order and tidiness she sees around her, and I doubt not that as a woman Alice will fulfil her higher mission in life as well, bringing as much comfort to herself and others as her early friend the good old cow did in the way which God had assigned to her.

TWIN SISTERS.

THEY had been born together,
In the same cradle lay,
And by the same fond mother
Cherished from day to day.

And when they play'd together,
No stranger ever knew
The one child from the other,
Like as two drops of dew.

They had grown up together,
Mind answering to mind;
Clinging to one another,
Like two frail plants entwined.

Oh! had they died together,
As flowers on the same stem
Wither in chilly weather,
Death had been sweet to them.

But Death, who still doth gather
The flowers that please him best,
Left one and took the other
To its eternal rest.

THE FOX, THE GOAT, AND THE CARROTS.

A Fable, translated from the French.

ONCE a Fox and a Goat were walking together along a high-road. After they had gone some distance they saw a sack lying against a hedge.

'What do you think is inside that sack?' said the Goat.

'I will go and see,' replied the Fox; and, putting his nose into a hole tied tightly by a cord, he shook about the bag so much that the rope at last gave way, and the finest carrots one could wish for fell out through the hole.

'They are for me,' said the Fox, 'for I opened the sack.'

'Yes,' said the Goat; 'but I gave you the idea, and if you touch them I will tear your sides with my horns.'

The Fox looked at the Goat's great horns and showed his teeth.

The Goat, on seeing the Fox's teeth, thought within herself, 'I don't much like that kind of weapon.'

And the Fox said to himself, 'I will not expose my sides to those formidable horns.'

After a minute's silence the Fox answered: 'Why do we stand here looking at each other? What is the use of that? Let us see who is the stronger. Look, down there are two heaps of stones. You shall take one and I the other. He who shall first throw it over his head shall eat the carrots.'

'Very well,' said the Goat. So they went to their heaps of stones.

The Goat put her legs firmly together, and struck with her horns so forcibly that the ground resounded; but the heap did not shake.

'Ah! you do not hit hard enough,' said the Fox.

The Goat went three steps backwards, and ran at the heap with all her strength. But, crack! her horns broke!

When the Fox saw that he began to skip about. 'Oh, my dear friend,' said he, 'the carrots belong to me now!'

'Not yet,' said the Goat; 'you have not succeeded in your task yet. If you touch the carrots, I will pierce your side with the remainder of my horns.'

The Fox looked at the Goat, and said to himself, 'She has one left still, which is almost whole; she will tear my sides with it.'

'Well,' said he, 'I will knock down my heap, then; it is nothing for me.'

He began to dig with his fore-paws till he had made a great hole in the ground. The stones tottered and fell; but, alas! they fell on the Fox and broke his left paw.

Then the two companions looked at one another—the one with her broken horns, the other with his broken paw.

'Run after the carrots,' said the Goat, maliciously; 'I will give them up to you.'

'I cannot,' answered the Fox, 'my paw hurts me too much. Take them yourself.'

'That is just what I am going to do,' said the Goat, and she ran up to the sack; but neither bag nor carrots were to be seen: while they were disputing a peasant had gone by and carried all away.

'Alas!' cried the Goat, 'how senseless we have been! If we had divided the treasure, we should have kept whole—I my horns, you your paw, and we should have had carrots enough to satisfy us both.'

BOB AND BROWNIE.

—o—

WHEN our London cousins came to see us last year, and we showed them our ponies, Bob and Brownie, Algernon called out, 'Oh, what ugly, rough things!' (They are very rough-looking, you know, with shaggy hair hanging over their eyes.) But brother Miles grew angry at this and said, 'If they are ugly, they are a great deal cleverer than your smart park ponies, as Lilla could tell you.' I am Lilla, and I always tell all Miles's stories, because he stammers a little when he is excited.

So, as I thought there was going to be a dispute between Algy and him, I began quite quickly:—'Oh, yes! you will like to hear about it, Algy, and so will Cissy; so listen. It was last autumn, and old Janet in the village had a letter from her brother, to say he had been lucky in his last trip;—he is a sea-captain, and he was sending her in the very next letter a note for a hundred pounds for a present. Janet has a young man living with her as her adopted son, though he is no relation of hers; and he is a gardener, and helps our man sometimes. Well, George was just as pleased as Janet at this good luck, and said how nice it was; his old mother would now have something to fall back on if anything ever happened to him; and all the village came to congratulate Janet on her good fortune, and we went, too, and had tea and muffins in her cottage.

'Well, it might have been a week after this, and Miles and I were just finishing off two colds we had caught at a children's party, when our gardener came up to us as we were running round the garden (mother had said we were not to sit down), and said, "This is a bad job, Mr. Miles, about George Warder."

'Miles stared, and I said, "Oh, what is it? please tell us."

'And then he said that George had gone off one day across the mountain, to do a day's work at Sir

John Fielder's, and he had made some excuse to leave early, and walked off to Mirkdale Post-office, where they gave him Janet's letter, with the hundred pounds in.'

'"Well," said I; and Miles called out, "Go on."

'"It's most too bad to believe, sir," said Thomas, "but he haven't been seen since, and folk do say he's made off to 'Merica with the poor old soul's money—he that owed her everything!"

'"What a lie!" said Miles.

'Mother doesn't like Miles to use strong words, but I did think he was right that once.

'Neither he nor I would believe a word that the cruel people in the village said about George. We protested there was some mistake; some accident had happened to him, or he had suddenly been called away, but no one else thought so. George was known to have been of a roving turn, and even kindly-disposed people fancied that getting hold of so much money had turned his head.

'"He has been missing twenty-four hours now," Thomas said. Miles and I felt very unhappy. He got *Robinson Crusoe* to read, as he always does when things go wrong; and I ran down to the village, to see Janet and console her.

'She was distracted, poor thing, between the loss of her money and the loss of George. She did not really believe he had stolen it, but the neighbours had so puzzled her poor old head that she did not know what to think.

'Father was from home, so we had no one to advise us, but Miles and I made a plan overnight to search all Mirkdale and Broadholme, the big mountain between the post-office and our village, for we believed George to be lost or hurt in that wild country.

'It was a whole holiday next day, luckily, and neither Miles nor I sneezed once at breakfast, so mother only sighed a little when we said we must have a good gallop on our ponies after being so long indoors.

'We put two rolls from breakfast in our pockets, and Miles, with a very grave face, fetched something secretly out of father's own room. He showed it me later on; it was a silver flask with brandy in it. "I don't usually meddle with father's private possessions," he said, "but this may be needed."

'We had a lovely gallop to the foot of Broadholme. I am afraid we almost forgot poor George, we enjoyed it so; but climbing up the steep side we talked a great deal of him, and Miles settled which way I and Brownie were to go, and where we should meet him and Bob.

'"And use your eyes well, Lilla," he said. "Mind, George has a grey coat on, so study anything lumpish you see lying on the heather, and specially look the Blackstone precipice—he may have fallen down over."

'It made me shiver a little to hear all this, but I resolved to be brave and try my best to find George. Miles gave me half the brandy in an old gum-bottle and we separated.

'Do what we could, though, there was no George to be seen; and when Miles and I met in sight of Mirkdale post-office, though two miles from it, we both had disappointed faces. We sat down and ate our rolls and told our adventures, while Bob and Brownie wandered away to get what luncheon they could off the mountain-side.

'"We must have one more look Mirkdale way, and then go home, because mother will be getting frightened about us." Miles was just saying that, when we heard a whinny from Brownie. She was standing, looking very excited, a little way off.

'We took no notice, for we were both thinking of George.

'In another minute she startled us by whinnying again, almost in our ears, and then she stooped down and caught Miles' sleeve between her teeth.

'"What does she want? I have no bread for her," said Miles.

'But all in a minute I felt my cheeks burn and I jumped up, for I guessed what she wanted.

'When I stood up she looked at me and shook her head, trotting gently away, and every now and then peeping over her shoulder to see if we were following.

'Of course we were; for Miles, too, guessed that the clever darling had come on purpose to fetch us.

'We had not far to go. There was what Miles and I called a baby-precipice close by—a rock grassed to the edges, with a drop of about a dozen feet below on to a smooth grassy level. Here Bob and Brownie had wandered by a more gentle descent, and here stood Bob sniffing the form of—George Warder!

'Yes, there he was, lying asleep or dead. Brownie looked so satisfied when she had brought us to the spot! He must have walked over the edge of the rock and been stunned by the fall.

'He had such a peaceful expression on his face that Miles said directly, "He's all right, Lil; hold his head while I get the brandy."

'And he did get all right, though his leg was broken, and he had lain helpless for two nights and a day in the open air.

'Miles got help from the Post-office, and I watched beside George till he came back. The letter and the money were all safe in his pocket. He was looking at the direction, he said, and thinking of old Janet's joy, when he fell over the rock.

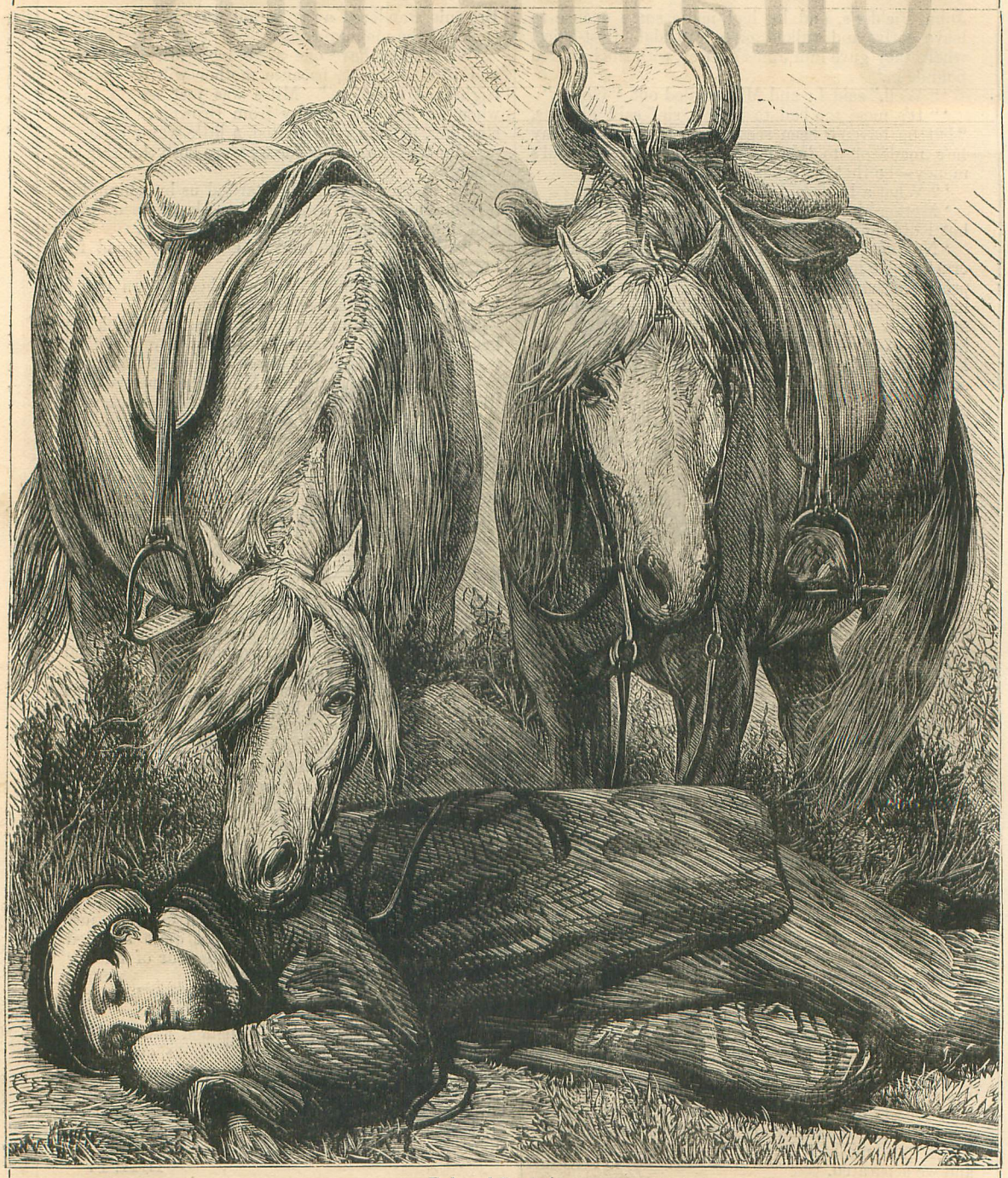
'You can fancy how happy we felt riding home, while four men carried George on a hurdle; and how we petted Bob and Brownie for being so clever. For Miles declares to this day that Bob told Brownie to go and rouse us while he stayed with George; just like we did afterwards. And I am quite satisfied that his pony should have half the honour of finding George.

'Now don't you think we have reason to be proud of Bob and Brownie?'

'George's leg? Oh, that is mended now, and he is in the garden to-day, helping Thomas, and father has put the hundred pounds out at good interest.'

'And the people who said cruel things of him? Oh, they are all forgiven: every one was so glad to see George, and so anxious to help him in his illness, that everything that went before was forgotten.'

H. A. F.



Bob and Brownie.

The Enlarged Series of 'THE PRIZE,' for Girls and Boys, price One Penny, Monthly.

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Chatterbox.

The Colonel carrying Tom home.

HALT!

(*Continued from page* 51.)

I FELT as if nothing on earth could stop me, that I must go and get Nan out; but I felt that Frank was slackening his pace and stopping, and then I was going alone. I don't know how I meant to do it, only I must get the child out somehow at once, and so I went straight on. I heard a loud crack, but I was only thinking of Nan, not of myself, and I only thought that another bit of the ice had given way; and then, all at once, something seemed to come between me and the snowy bank, and the trees, and the pale blue sky, something closing in round me, and I was in the water. It was all done in half a minute, though it takes so long to describe. I was not really long in the water, but it seemed like hours, so many things came into my mind. Father and mother, and home, and school, and little Nan, and things I had done wrong, all jumbled up together. I remember coming up to the light and trying to swim, and catching at an edge of ice, and its cracking and going down with me, and I fancy I saw Bertie's face, so white and frightened, but I am not sure; and then I don't remember any more, till I found myself in bed, heaped up with blankets and eider-down quilts, and my limbs glowing all over with the rubbing they had had, and the Colonel in his shirt sleeves, looking down smiling at me, and Mrs. Cheviot bringing in something hot and steaming for me to drink. Bertie was sitting on the foot of the bed, and Frank peering in whenever the door opened. I felt rather queer and odd, and did not remember at first what had happened, but in a minute or two it all came back, and I said, 'Where's Nan?'

'Safe and sound,' said the Colonel, 'and very little the worse for the ducking—is she, Mrs. Cheviot?'

'No indeed, sir,' said Mrs. Cheviot. 'I really think it's done her good.'

'You shall see for yourself soon,' the Colonel said. 'We brought her home here, and she shall come in and report herself when she has finished an extensive tea, which she was putting away downstairs.'

Afterwards, when the Colonel, and Frank, and Bertie had gone down to dinner, Mrs. Cheviot brought in Nan to see me, looking cleaner than I had ever seen her before, and her hair very crisp and curly from the wetting, and a frock that had been borrowed from a neighbour, much neater than her own. She stood by the bed looking at me.

'Ah! you may well look,' said Mrs. Cheviot, 'to see poor Master Tom, as was nearly drowned, just to save a naughty little girl who is no good to anybody!'

Nan put one finger into her mouth.

'You oughtn't to be a naughty girl, never again as long as you live; so make a courtesy to the good young gent as saved your life.'

'Don't say that,' I said. 'I didn't save her life; I had to be saved myself. Tell me how they did it?'

So Mrs. Cheviot, nothing loth, sat down, and I held out my hand to little Nan, and she sidled across and put her hand in mine.

'Well, you see, the Colonel he always knows best what's to be done, and he shouted to Master Frank not to go rushing to the edge, just to get in too, but to run up to the lodge as fast as he could, and bring the ladder that was standing against the wall there. So he and Master Bertie brought that long ladder down—however they did it I don't know—while the Colonel he threw himself flat on the ice, to see if he could reach you or the child when you came to the surface, and so as his whole weight should not be on the edge; but such a big bit broke off when you went in that he could not reach either; but the ladder soon came, and they put it across from the bank to the firm ice, and then they soon got hold of you. The little girl was not insensible, and Master Frank carried her home, wrapped up in a blanket from the lodge. You were quite gone, and they talked of taking you into the lodge, but the Colonel, he knew as you would soon come to, and he carried you home just like a baby, running all the way. He's a strong man for his years, and no mistake; and he would do all the rubbing himself too; no one else laid a hand to you, except, perhaps, Master Bertie, who was terrible overcome by it all.'

So Mrs. Cheviot talked away in the firelight, and Nan fell asleep in the big chair by the bed, with her head on my arm, and so the Colonel found her when he came up, and Mrs. Cheviot carried her off and put her to bed.

'Colonel,' I said, when we were parting at night, 'I don't think I shall ever be a soldier.'

'Eh?' he said; 'why not?'

'I can't learn to halt when I am told. I know I only made it worse by rushing to Nan to-day, and if I had stopped as you told me, I might have been of use like Frank was: but I could not stop. I really could not.'

'Never mind, my boy; a warm, generous heart is worth its weight in gold in every profession. Life teaches us discipline, Tom, and you will learn it in time whether you are a soldier or not. We shall all have a word of thanks to add to our prayers to-night,' added the Colonel. 'And that won't be all, I hope, but we will try to show forth our thankfulness not only with our lips but in our lives, as the Prayer-book says. Won't we, Tom?'

CHAPTER X.

I WAS soon all right again, and indeed, when I woke up the next morning, I do not think there was much wrong. Mrs. Cheviot was quite surprised at my getting no harm from my ducking—I had almost said disappointed, for it really seemed like it, only she was too kind-hearted to have wished all her dark expectations and prophecies to be fulfilled. First of all, I was to sink from exhaustion, and she plied me with all sorts of nice things, which I did not at all object to. When she could not persuade herself that I was pale, and weak, and languid, she was sure that fever was coming on; my colour was not natural, and my eyes were too bright, and I was fidgety from the restlessness of fever. I think I ate her out of this notion, for I am sure no one in a fever could

make a loaf of bread and a pat of butter look so foolish as I did. Then she took refuge in rheumatism, and stuck to that for weeks, in spite of all I could do. 'Ah!' she would say, 'boys is so full of spirits; and Master Tom, he were always one for making light of things! But it's not likely that any one should be half-drowned, let alone frozen, and be none the worse for it, and I can see as he never has been the same boy since; and mark my words, if he's not drawn up with rheumatics before ever he's an old man, my name's not Anne Cheviot!'

And then she would go on to tell heart-rending stories of people she had known crippled with rheumatism, through far less accidents than mine. As for little Nan, she was my devoted slave, and followed me about, whenever she had a chance, wherever I went, except down to Sherlake, which she always avoided.

We did not go down there much, for a slow thaw set in, and the ice was rough and soppy, even before it grew thin and unsafe. We began to talk of fox-hunting, and to wonder if the weather would break up in time to give us a run with the hounds before the holidays were over.

There was a pack of foxhounds not far from where Colonel Morris lived, and one of the whips lived close by, and was a very jolly sort of fellow. He could tell all sorts of stories of adventures in the hunting-field, and liked to have us after him, both up to the kennels and at home. There was a carpet in his best parlour made of hounds' skins, and a pincushion made of the hoof his favourite horse, Chanticleer, who put his foot into a rabbit-hole and broke his back under Mostyn. In this room, too, there were foxes' heads in all directions, and velvet hunting-caps, and 'tops,' and 'pink' coats, and long whips; and his little boy had a brush stuck in his hat, and two more round his neck for a fur. As for the kennels, we could have spent all day there, if the huntsman had not been rather a surly old fellow; but whenever he was out of the way we paid Mostyn a visit, and got to know all the hounds and their names nearly as well as Mostyn himself. We came to the conclusion that it must be very jolly to be a huntsman, or even a whipper-in, and have for one's everyday work what most people only have now and then for a pleasure.

One afternoon we had been up at the kennels, and were coming back in the dusk all three together, and we were talking, as we so often did, of our future lives, and of going into the army.

'Well,' I said at last, 'if I can't be a soldier, I'll be a foxhunter. Even a lawyer isn't tied to his stool for ever, and when I feel sick of it I shall go off and have a run with the hounds. Hark forrard! Hark forrard! Tantivey! and let the steam off! You can go right a-head anyhow, just as you like, and there's nobody to say "March!" when you've a mind to leave off, and "Halt!" when you're off across the country. There's no marking time and waiting for orders, and bothering drill, in the hunting-field.'

'It's every one for himself,' said Frank; 'as the donkey said when he danced among the chickens. But you'll find plenty to call out "Halt!" if you ride over the hounds.'

'Oh, I shouldn't do that—not I! I should be like that fellow Mostyn was describing, who is such a stunner to go; nothing stops him; he goes like a dart over everything, and as cool as a cucumber all the time, and always in at the death without turning a hair. Mostyn said he thought he would go over a house if it stood in his way, without thinking twice. I'll be just such another, you see if I don't! And some day while you're hard at it, doing goose-step, or something dull and bothering, you'll hear a tallyho! and see me go by like a shot, all in pink, with a stunning chestnut under me, and all the rest of the field ever so far behind me.'

'Fox and all!' put in Frank; 'that's the way to make sure of being in at the death—get on well a-head and then turn round and wait.'

'Get out!' I went on. 'You won't laugh when you see me go like Mazeppa. I shall just nod to you, and say, "How do, Halliday? Have a weed?" And then be off before you have time to groan and shake your head and say, "No smoking allowed on parade," or "Against orders."'

'Mazeppa, indeed!' said Frank, derisively; 'more like John Gilpin! I shall be a general by that time, and I'll send one of my orderlies to pick up your hat and wig, and see if you are in the ditch anywhere about. Holla! there's the Colonel! Present arms!'

We all three drew up in a line and saluted him in a military style as he came up, and expected some orders given in the hoarse, indistinct roar of the drill sergeant: 'As yer was! Right about face! Shoulder arms! March!'

He generally had something of the kind ready for us, but to-day he did not seem to notice our soldier-like appearance, and only gave us a little nod as he came up, to show that he saw us. Even as he came along the road I could see there was something amiss, though he came striding along his usual pace (which Mrs. Cheviot called his seven-league boots on), and carried his head erect and his shoulders as square as ever.

Frank too saw that something was wrong, for he gave a whistle and said, 'Holla! what's up? Look out for squalls. Do you think he's heard of our chivying the pigs on the ice? or what? Anyhow, there's breakers a-head!'

Bersiker had caught the infection and walked at his master's heels in majestic gloom, with a droop in his ears and tail that corresponded with the droop in the Colonel's grey moustaches. It was wonderful how that creature felt his master's moods, whatever they might be. Mrs. Cheviot said, that when the Colonel was ill they could scarcely coax Bersiker to eat; he would make his way upstairs and lie on the mat listening and watching. 'Just as if, poor brute!' Mrs. Cheviot said, 'he could keep off death itself, like he does the thievish tramps as are always skulking about! But, oh, dear! it's not love nor watching of man or woman, let alone a poor beast, as can keep a soul when its time comes.'

Little Rags had been with us and went bustling off to meet Bersiker as soon as he saw him, with a vast deal to say about all his adventures with us, with all sorts of jokes and fun sparkling in his sharp eyes, and wagging his tail. But Bersiker took as little notice of him as the Colonel did of us, so he had to give up the idea of a regular game of play with

"We all three saluted him in military style."

the old deer-hound, and pretend to find a rat in the hedge. This, too, gave Bertie and me a pretext for falling behind to watch him, while Frank and the Colonel walked on together.

'He's not vexed with anything we've been doing!' said Bertie. 'Look there!'

I saw that the Colonel had put his hand on Frank's shoulder, and was talking to him as they walked along together, in a way that looked more affectionate than angry.

'Perhaps he's had some bad news,' he said, 'for he's been to Silverbridge to fetch the afternoon letters.'

I had a letter from father in my pocket which had only come that morning, so I felt sure that the bad news could not concern us; and besides, it was only a guess of Bertie's, and just then Rags really did

Italian Cats'-meat Boy.

turn out a rat, so I forgot all about the Colonel in the excitement of the chase.

'After him, Rags! Fetch him out! Find him!'

But the old fellow was too wily to be caught; we only caught a glimpse of him as he whisked along the bank and into the pond at the corner of the road; and then he dived, and while Bertie, and I, and Rags, watched the bubbles in breathless excitement, up he comes on the other side and into a hole there as easily and quietly as possible: and—though Rags tore round the pond with a great deal of indignant barking, and scratched at the hole till he was quite exhausted and covered with dirt—we saw no more of him. We could hardly persuade Rags to come away, but it was getting dark and the Colonel and Frank had got home long ago.

(*To be continued.*)

ITALIAN CATS'-MEAT BOY.

PUSS must be fed in Italy as well as elsewhere, and doubtless she looks as eagerly for the approach of her butcher as do her relatives in England. The town cat at least does so, and may be seen anxiously mewing in the face of the ragged lad who carries the tempting morsels she desires.

The country cat has other excitements connected with her dinner: I have seen her run down a lizard on a sunny morning, seize it by the tail, which she proceeded to consume while the bereaved reptile ran cheerfully away without its tail, and was seen for days afterwards disporting itself in the sunshine curtailed but content.

One anecdote of an Italian cat, vouched for by the relator, displays so much intellect that I must give it to our English readers. Puss—she was a Roman lady—had noticed that cakes of a nature peculiarly grateful to her were kept in a certain cupboard, which was usually locked. One day, however, she espied the key lying on the table, and hastily possessed herself of it, carrying it in her mouth to the cupboard, and glancing in a distressed manner at the keyhole, into which she could not, of course, fit it. It is needless to say that her plainly expressed wishes were gratified, and that Puss was given the cake she had so fairly earned. H. A. F.

PETER POTT THE BLACKSMITH, AND HIS RAILWAY ADVENTURE.

ON the banks of the river Wupper, which falls into the Rhine below the town of Opladen, extends a district which goes by the name of the Factory-land. It is called thus because every hill and valley swarms with factories, large and small, and the country looks like an asparagus-bed in May; only the asparagus here are of stone and iron, 100 feet in height, and more, and are constantly puffing smoke and fire into the sky. If the spinners and weavers have taken possession of the valleys, the smiths and iron-workers have made themselves masters of the hills; and on these heights chimneys are smoking and bellows roaring, and there is such a constant hammering, grinding, and filing, that one might imagine Vulcan himself had set up his workshop in these parts. Here every imaginable tool or instrument which the joiner, carpenter, cooper, tinker, cabinet-maker, and many other hand-workers and tradesmen, require, is made out of steel and iron; and these articles are sent all over the world,—to North and South America, to the East and West Indies—wherever there is anything to hammer, to nail, to bore, to cut, or to lock.

This is, indeed, a very remarkable district; for though the soil is poor, and after hard tilling bears little, it is as thickly populated as almost any country in Europe, and by a diligent, and prosperous race.

Our story relates to a man who lived in this busy, thriving Wupperthal, whose name was Peter Pott, a smith by trade.

He did not work in a factory, but, like many others, he worked on his own account—as a free man, as his own master. Early and late he swung his hammer; and brought himself, with his wife and children, honestly and respectably through the world. He had, like all the small independent workmen of those parts, devoted himself to making one single article, and knew how to do that neatly, quickly, and well. He constructed iron-bolts, such as are used on doors, windows, chests, boxes, and so on, all over the world.

Our Peter was a thoroughly honest, good, kind-hearted fellow, who would not have hurt a hair of a child's head—who was on friendly terms with everybody, and was esteemed and loved by his neighbours for his uprightness and good nature.

But a perfect angel—if, indeed, it were possible for a smith to be an angel—he was not; for he had the great fault, he was fond of drink: and after he had sold his goods, or when he went out for an afternoon's holiday, he might be seen walking home not very steadily, and sometimes holding a discourse with the moon, or with the sign-post. At these times Peter was not quarrelsome; he was contented with himself and the whole world: he felt himself happy and rich—richer even than Rothschild, with whom he had no desire to change places.

But when he got home matters were not so smooth; a storm generally arose, followed by a heavy downpour upon Peter's head, which he bore with patience, submitting to what fate, in the form of his good wife, whom he heartily loved, inflicted on him.

Not very long ago, however, something happened to Peter Pott which entirely cured him of this fault. Peter had executed an order for several hundred dozen bolts—it was the largest work he had ever undertaken—and by his industry he had succeeded in completing the work at the appointed day. The largest portion of the goods he had already forwarded by the carrier to their destination, the last and smaller part he determined to take himself in his basket on his back, by the railway, to deliver them to his customer, and receive from him his well-earned pay.

'Peter,' said his wife, as she held out her hand to his to say good-bye, 'Peter, don't come home too late. It is a long way—and with so much money, through that dark wood, an accident might happen to you in the night.'

'Bah!' said Peter; 'don't be anxious, Marianne! I have a good friend with me,' and he shook his thick-knotted stick; 'and what else is the use of Spitz, there?'

Spitz was Peter's Pomeranian dog; his faithful companion, who accompanied him in all his wanderings.

Peter was never without his faithful Spitz; and if people saw him they knew that Peter could not be far off.

Marianne smiled and held up her finger,—

'Very well, Peter; only don't come home with a *double* Spitz!'

'What do you mean by a double Spitz?' said Peter, turning rather red. 'There won't be anything of the kind. I have earned a bottle of good wine, and that I shall have at the "Red Lion;" but a drop anywhere else, sure as I——'

'Come, Peter, no swearing!' said his wife; 'may God be with you, and be an honest, sober man!'

Peter started with his heavy burden and a light heart, followed by his faithful dog, to the railway station.

'Double Spitz? yes, indeed!' he murmured to himself. 'The good Marianne! nothing double, we will remain single—won't we, Spitz?'

The dog took a jump, as if he wished to express his wish that his master should not give him a rival.

After several hours' walk Peter reached the railway station. It was a hot summer morning; Peter was tired and thirsty, and the bright glasses and full bottles in the refreshment-bar, as well as the freshly-tapped cask of foaming beer, temptingly invited Peter to drink. But he thought of his Marianne at home, and of his promise.

'Be a man, Peter!' he said to himself, as he filled his short pipe and, with a sigh, turned his back to the refreshment-bar and went into the ticket-office. 'I will see which of us is master—I, or my thirst,' he muttered, as he puffed away like a locomotive.

After about a quarter of an hour he was sitting in the train, in a third-class carriage, and flying towards his destination, the town of X——.

When he arrived in the town, at the house of the merchant and iron-dealer, Martin, his business was soon settled. Mr. Martin praised Peter for his punctuality and his good work, he called him a first-rate workman, and an honest man; so that Peter's heart swelled; and Mr. Martin insisted that, before he settled with him, Peter should sit down to the table. And on the table stood a very inviting-looking ham, a potato-salad, and a bottle of Rhine wine, which sparkled like liquid gold through the white glass.

'Eat and drink!—you have well earned it,' said Mr. Martin. 'Meanwhile, I will fetch your money.'

Peter did not require to be asked twice: he set to work, and Spitz also received his share. The bottle was empty, the potato-salad had disappeared, and a large breach had been made in the ham, when Mr. Martin came back, and said,—

'It amounts to exactly 190 thalers, but I shall make it up to the 200; because your work is so well and punctually done.'

And then he counted out 200 bright new thalers on the table. At the same time Mr. Martin gave him a large new order.

Two hundred thalers! So much money at once Peter had never possessed, not even in his dreams. He went through the streets of the town as if he were on stilts; a feeling of satisfaction, such as he had never before felt, swelled his breast, and he struck his pockets, filled with silver, as if he wished to say, 'What does the whole Wupperthal cost? I will pay for it in ready money.'

He ought properly to have gone home now, for the next train went in a quarter of an hour.

'But, no!' he thought, 'there is no hurry: I must buy something for my old woman—a warm handkerchief, which she has long wanted, and a new cap and a silk apron. The ten extra thalers are for Marianne.'

These presents were purchased and packed away in the basket; and now Peter turned seriously towards the station for a train: an 'express' went in half an hour. But as Peter passed by the 'Red Lion' he remained standing, and gazed at the animal which was painted on the sign-board.

This Lion held a foaming glass of beer in his fore-paw, and was putting out his tongue, as if he wished to taste the beer. Peter's mouth watered.

'How thirsty such a ham makes one feel! I could scarcely believe it. To travel home by the 'express,' second-class, my old woman would faint at the very idea; besides, that bottle at Mr. Martin's was not really worth much.'

Then, suddenly, the window of the 'Lion' was opened, and the landlord's round face, just like the full moon, met Peter's most smilingly.

'Good morning, Mr. Pott!' exclaimed mine host. 'Will you honour me by looking in? A couple of your friends are here. We have just tapped a fresh cask.'

Two minutes after Peter was sitting behind the table of the 'Red Lion,' had his first foaming beer-glass in his hand, and was drinking to the health of his friend Bernard, with whom, as a Landwehr-man, he had stood side-by-side in the battle-field against the French; and with the barber Kretzer, who had twice been in Metz with a hospital-train.

'Your good health, Bernard!'

'Your good health, Peter!'

'Welcome, Kretzer!'

The glasses struck together, and the three friends buried their faces in the foaming liquor.

'Landlord, another glass, please!'

'One for me, too!'

'And for me!'

And you were at Gravelotte, were you, and then came into Metz? Now tell us all about it.'

And they told all sorts of stories, sad and merry, about battles and hospitals—true and false; and the barber told such lies that Peter Pott sat with his mouth as well as his eyes wide open.

'Landlord, some more beer; I will pay for it all,' cried Peter, in his enthusiasm.

'Long live our Emperor William! Fill your glasses to his health, my friends!'

'And our Fritz, long may he live!'

'And Moltke, too! his good health!'

'Dear Fatherland, thou mayest rest in peace!'

And thus they told stories, drank toasts, and sung.

Peter was so merry and happy that he forgot both the time and the place. Then, when the landlord raised his glass and exclaimed, 'And Bismarck, too! long life to him—to him above every one!' then Peter thought of his old woman at home; for Mrs. Marianne played in Peter's household very much the same part as the Iron Count in the German empire.

'Lads! now one farewell draught! I must be off, or I shall miss the last train. Here is the money.'

He threw two new thalers down upon the table, shook hands with his friends, seized his basket and stick, and, followed by his Spitz, directed his steps to the railway station, singing on the way,—'Dear Fatherland, thou mayest rest in peace!' so loud that he made the windows tremble.

(*Concluded in our next.*)

"Very well, Peter; only don't come home with a *double* Spitz!"

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Chatterbox.

A Clever Fox.

A CLEVER FOX.

—o—

ONE summer's day, a gentleman was lying under the shelter of some shrubs on the banks of the Tweed, when his attention was attracted by the cries of wild fowl, accompanied by a great deal of fluttering and splashing. On looking round he saw a large brood of ducks, which had been disturbed by the drifting of a fir branch among them. After circling in the air for a little time, they again settled down on their feeding-ground.

Two or three minutes elapsed, when the same event again occurred. A branch drifted down with the stream into the midst of the ducks, and startled them from their repast. Once more they rose upon the wing, clamouring loudly, but when the harmless bough had drifted by settled themselves down upon the water as before. This occurred so frequently, that at last they scarcely troubled themselves to flutter out of the way, even when about to be touched by the drifting bough.

The gentleman, meantime, marking the regular intervals at which the fir-branches followed each other in the same track, looked for a cause, and at length he saw, higher up the bank of the stream, a fox, which, having evidently set them adrift, was eagerly watching their progress and the effect they produced. Satisfied with the result, cunning Reynard at last selected a larger branch of spruce-fir than usual, and couching himself down on it, set it adrift as he had done the others. The birds now, having ceased to fear the boughs, scarcely moved till the fox was in the midst of them, when, making rapid snaps right and left, he secured two fine young ducks as his prey, and floated forward in triumph on his raft; while the surviving fowls, clamouring in terror, took to flight, and returned no more to the spot.

HALT!

(*Continued from page* 61.)

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN we got in, we found the Colonel sitting in the dining-room by the fire. The lamp had not been brought in, and the only light was from the great glowing log on the hearth. Frank was not there, and the Colonel seemed half asleep in his arm-chair. I knelt down in front of the fire and began warming my hands, and giving the Colonel an account of the rat-hunt, ending up with, 'And I say, Colonel, you ought to hold a court-martial on Rags, for he's downright disobedient. He would not come out of the hole, though I called and whistled till I was black in the face, and I could just see the tip of his tail, looking as obstinate as anything. He's ready enough to go when we set him on, but he does not like the recall any more than other people, and he's deaf when we call out "Halt!"'

The Colonel had hardly seemed to be paying any attention to what I said till this moment, and even now he seemed speaking more to himself than to me.

'Poor little Rags!' he said. 'Poor fellow!'

Rags heard his name, and looked up at his master with bright, inquiring eyes; but the Colonel was not thinking of him, though he said his name.

'It's the same with every one,' he went on; 'just the same! It's the sudden "halt!" the unexpected recall, that is so trying, just when the enemy's ranks are breaking, or the breach is open for taking the fortress, and victory seems so near. If the men could only see the reason of it, it would make it so much easier; but they can't, and they can only take it on trust that the General knows best. That's where it is, Tom; it's only faith in the General that makes obedience easy, or even possible.'

I could not quite see what the Colonel was aiming at. I had a sort of uneasy feeling that I had been doing something wrong again, not attending to orders, and the memory of Farmer Poole's pigs slipping about on the ice gave me rather a pain in the conscience; but I could not quite tell how what he said applied to that bit of mischief. Indeed his whole tone seemed too serious to have much to do with such a subject as pigs, especially pigs on the ice. However, I put on a penitent expression of countenance and sighed, and made up my mind that if I was going to have a talking to, the sooner it was over the better.

'It's like pulling up a horse when he's at full gallop, Tom, that's what it is!'

'Yes,' I answered humbly, 'I suppose so.'

But, all the same, I could not see the resemblance between a galloping horse and the struggling pigs slipping and sliding about.

'I know what it is myself, well enough!' went on the Colonel.

'When he was learning to skate, I suppose!' I thought to myself.

'But that was years ago.'

'Yes, I suppose it was.'

'I am sorry for all of them,' he continued; 'but it's not so bad for the young ones, they will get over it better.'

My mind was so full of the scene with the pigs, that every word he said brought it more before me, and it was a good thing that the glow of the log did not show my face too plainly, for I could not help smiling at the moment at the remembrance of the despairing grunts of an old mother pig, when her feet kept slipping from under her great unwieldy body, and I thought that the young ones were certainly more likely to get over their skating adventures well than their older and stouter relatives. I am very glad the Colonel did not see me smile, for the next minute I found out that I was altogether on the wrong tack, and that there was nothing to smile at in the news the Colonel was brooding over in the firelight.

'It's Halliday it will come the hardest on; he's not so young as he used to be: but still I keep thinking of Frank and his disappointment more than anything.'

'Frank's disappointment?' I asked. 'What is it? May I know about it?'

'Yes, to be sure; there's no secret. But I fancied you had seen Frank and had heard all about it!'

'No, we have only just come in. But we guessed there was something wrong.'

Bertie came across to the hearth-rug to hear what was said.

'I had a letter from Frank's father, my brother-in-law. He's a merchant, you know. Well, there's been a run of ill-fortune—a rascally managing clerk. Several other big houses have failed. Well, the long and short of it is, that Halliday is ruined, and instead of being a rich, prosperous man, he has to begin life again. There's not a breath against him. He's too great a sufferer himself to be even suspected, poor fellow! He and I are just of an age; we were at school together—great chums, as you would say; and he married my youngest sister. Poor Bessie! such a delicate, frail creature! it seemed as if a breath would blow her away—not fit for roughing it. But the wind will be tempered to her, never fear!'

He was silent a minute, and then went on:—

'They're good children, every one of them! There's Jack and Sydney are both going to exchange into a regiment going to India. Poor Jack! Such an extravagant young dandy, too! His gloves and buttonhole-flowers cost as much alone as he'll have to live upon now—and he'll do it, and look as jolly over it as ever, see if he doesn't! Then there's Oliver! Such a splendid young fellow! Done first-rate at Woolwich, and just waiting for his commission. An old friend of his father's has just offered him a place in his office; a good opening not to be despised, where he will get a salary at once; and the lad has accepted it, and pretends to be pleased and to consider himself very fortunate, when I know he would almost rather be hanged, and it will pretty nearly break his heart to give up his profession. Then there's Frank——'

'Will it make much difference to him?' I asked.

'Difference! No more Harrow, no Woolwich, no commission! A great deal of difference in a life, Tom. Well, well! the General knows best, and it wasn't the plan of the campaign that they should go on so victoriously, drums beating, colours flying, and so the order to halt has come. It is a sharp piece of discipline!'

Just then Polly came in to lay the cloth for dinner, so the Colonel said no more, and we went up to wash our hands. As we passed Frank's door I hesitated.

'We'd better leave him alone!' Bertie said. 'I dare say he's cut up, and some fellows don't like to be talked to when they're down.'

He took the candlestick out of my hand and went on, but I stood hesitating on the dark landing. I felt so sorry for him, and I wanted to tell him so. I knew if I was in his place it would be a comfort to me to talk about it. And then, Bertie generally knew better than I did what was best to be done.

But just then as I stood debating, I heard a sound from the room like a stifled sob, and in a moment I turned the handle of the door and went in. The room was quite dark, but as my eyes got accustomed to the darkness I could make out that Frank was lying on the bed face downward.

'Who's there?' he said, as I entered. 'What do you want? Is dinner ready?'

'It's me!' I answered; 'and I'll go away if you'd rather.'

He did not say anything, so I thought I *could* stay, and I sat down on the end of the bed with my hands in my pockets. The bed was shaken from time to time, and a sob would sound now and then in spite of every effort to stifle it with pillows. I did not know what to say or do, and half wished I had not come in.

I wonder if people can feel how sorry or glad one is for them sometimes, without a word or a look? I think they can sometimes. I think Frank knew then how sorry I was, and took it kindly, though I was such a duffer I could not screw out a single word.

The sobs and the shakings grew less frequent by degrees, and at last Frank sat up.

'I say, Tom,' he began, 'I suppose the Colonel's told you it's all up with us; but don't you go and tell him I've made such a fool of myself over it. I made believe downstairs not to think much of it, don't you know; as if it was rather a lark than otherwise, as far as I am concerned. For he's taking it to heart no end, you see, and especially about me. Just as if it wasn't a hundred times worse for all the others! the poor old governor, and the *mater*, and Jack, and Syd, and Oliver.' And then came another relapse on to the bed and smothering in the pillows.

'He's going up to-morrow to see them *all*, and I should like to have gone too; but he thinks I'm best out of the way. He's such a brick, Tom, the Colonel is! *such* a brick! He shan't know what a blubbering baby I am!'

Then came a plunge off the bed and pouring out of water into the basin and tremendous sponging.

'I wish I hadn't been such a muff! I shall have to go down to dinner with thundering red eyes and a nose swelled like a turnip! I say, Tom, do go on as if nothing had happened, and don't let Bertie look pitiful, or I shall make a jackass of myself again, under the Colonel's very nose. Holla! there's the bell and you're not ready. Come, Tom! quick march—I mean, make haste, or you'll be late.'

I warned Bertie to keep his pitiful looks to himself and to talk as much as he could about other things; but the dinner and the rest of the evening were rather uncomfortable. Frank talked and laughed a good deal more than usual; but it was not necessary to look at his swollen eyelids and quivering lips to see that he was not really in such high spirits as he wished one to believe, and I am sure, if the Colonel was taken in by it, he was much more stupid than we gave him credit for. Then, too, we had talked so much about the army, that it was quite difficult to avoid any allusion to it, and we were always beginning some military expression and pulling up short, and I am such a blunderer. I got so nervous at last, that I hardly dared to look at Rags, for we had nicknamed him 'the Corporal,' and we used to put him through his drill every evening; and he was evidently expecting it, for he looked from one to another with such bright, anxious eyes, that spoke as plainly as any words. But Corporal Rags was excused from drill that night.

(*To be continued.*)

MORE CRABS AND SEA URCHINS.

'SURELY that can't be a crab?' said my little daughter, as she watched me drawing the curious-looking creature above the rocks in the picture; 'it is not the least like a crab: crabs have not got long, sharp tails!'

But I assured her that it really was a crab, in spite of its 'long, sharp tail,' and general want of likeness to its relations; and I then told her what I will now tell you, my young readers, that this crustacean does not belong to the usual order of crabs, but to a class called the 'Sword-tailed crustacea:' it is, moreover, a foreigner, being known as the *Molucca Crab*, and it is also called the *King Crab*. It has a very strong, heavy shell: its tail is used by the natives of the Molucca Islands for the heads of their arrows and spears.

The King Crab does not always remain in his briny kingdom, but he frequently betakes himself to the shore, and crawls and burrows in the sand; but this desire for a change of element and scene is often attended with inconvenience to his majesty, if not death. For his shell is so heavy, his tail so cumbersome, and his legs so short, that if caught and laid on his back the poor king is unable to get up again, thereby proving that not only 'uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,' but uneasy lies the crab which wears a shell so weighty as thus to leave him at the mercy of his foes.

The little crustacean clinging to the rock is one of the prettiest British species. Its body, shaped something like a heart, is dull-white, mottled with purple; it is rather rare, but it is to be found on the southern and western coasts. Its scientific name is *Portumnus variegatus*, but it is commonly called the 'Variegated Crab.'

On the sand you may see a member of the family of *Echinidæ*, or Sea-urchins. I hope my young readers have not quite forgotten the short account which I gave them some time ago of an echinus which I had in my aquarium, and of the curious habit it had of picking up small stones and bits of seaweed with its spines, and then crawling up the sides of the glass with its load. That marine pet of mine was the most common of the British sea-urchins; the one I have now drawn is the most rare. In shape, their shells are somewhat alike, but their spines are very different; those of the common sea-urchin being much shorter and more numerous. The specimen in the picture is called the 'Piper,' because its spines are supposed to resemble the tubes of a bag-pipe. These spines are not all alike, some being long and slender, and the others much shorter and flatter. The 'Piper' is, I believe, found only in the Zetland Seas.

ANNA C. WHEELEY.

"Out came our Peter, his basket on his back, his stick in his hand."

PETER POTT THE BLACKSMITH
AND HIS RAILWAY ADVENTURE.

(*Concluded from page 63.*)

AT the railway station all was quiet; the ticket-office was shut up, the waiting-room empty.

'I have come too early,' thought Peter, as he sat down in the waiting-room.

After a while the porter came with a broom in his hand, and began to sweep out the room.

'Come, my good friend, don't sweep me quite away,' exclaimed Peter. 'When does the train go?'

'It has been gone this half hour,' replied the porter, without stopping in his work.

'I mean, when does the next train go?'

'To-morrow morning, at six o'clock,' replied the man, with the most vexatious indifference. 'Go out now, my good fellow, I am just going to put out the lights.'

Peter was as if thunderstruck.

'What! not another train to-day? But I must be off—I must go home to my wife and children! I must! do you hear me?'

'My good friend, don't make a disturbance here, but go home quietly, or I shall have to fetch the station-master.'

'Go and fetch your station-master, then!' cried Peter, in a fury. 'That is just what I want. I must get home to my wife and children.'

The porter went out shaking his head, and in two minutes returned with the station-master.

'Here is the man, sir; he refuses to leave the waiting-room.'

'I must go home, Mr. Station-master!—I must get home to my wife and children!' cried poor Peter.

'But, my good man, it is no longer possible to-day,' said the officer, trying to calm him; 'you must wait till early to-morrow morning!'

'Or perhaps his Lordship the Baron will command a special train?' said the waggish porter, as he laughed jeeringly.

Then the blood rose in Peter's face.

'What about a baron? Must he be a baron to travel in a special train?'

'No,' said the station-master, laughing; 'any one can travel in a special train who has money enough for it. But for you, the joke would be too dear a one, I think?'

'Too dear?' exclaimed Peter, clapping his hands upon his pockets; 'what does this rascally special train cost to Y——?'

'Twenty-five thalers!'

'Twenty-five thalers! Order it! here are twenty-five thalers! Put in the engine! Peter Pott is no baron, but he can travel by a special train—his means allow him to do that.'

'Just as you like!' replied the station-master, politely. 'In a quarter of an hour you can start. Porter, send the railway-overseer to my office; meanwhile, I will telegraph to Y—— that a special train is to be expected.'

In a quarter of an hour Peter, with his Spitz, sat in the first-class, and the special train was steaming out of the railway station.

'Dear Fatherland, thou mayest rest in peace!' Peter sang out of the carriage window.

The telegram, that a special train was coming, had, meanwhile, caused the greatest excitement in Y——. The station-master there, who knew that for the last few days his Excellency the President of the Ministry had been expected, immediately informed the municipal authorities of the contents of the telegram, adding that it could only be a very exalted personage who would honour Y—— with a visit in a special train; and as the Crown Prince of Prussia happened to be in these parts, it was just possible that it might be the Crown Prince himself. The mayor was quite beside himself with excitement. In an hour the train might arrive, and nothing was yet prepared. Was it the Crown Prince?—was it the President? On this point the telegram gave no information. For the Crown Prince an illumination of the little town, and a grand supper at the 'Fortuna,' must be prepared; for the President, the streets had only to be decorated with flags.

'I will order the banquet, the illumination, and the flags,' was the wise decision of the first magistrate of the town; 'we shall then be ready in either case.'

The town-clerks and police went all through the place to hurry together all the members of the municipality; the town-crier rang his bell through all the streets, to order the inhabitants, as quickly as possible, to illuminate and decorate their houses with flags; while the landlord of the 'Fortuna' slaughtered in his yard a number of fowls and ducks, in preparation for the banquet.

The mayor, meanwhile, repeated to his wife the two speeches which he had prepared—one for the Crown Prince, the other for the President; then, in a black-tailed coat and a white neckcloth, he hastened to the railway station, where already the whole of the municipal body, with the town band, were assembled.

The station-master, in a grand uniform, informed these gentlemen that the telegraph had just brought the news that the special train had passed the last station. In a quarter of an hour it must arrive.

The town councillors gave to their faces a humble and reverential expression, the musicians tuned their instruments, and the mayor, with a somewhat pale face, turned aside in order to repeat his two speeches once more.

Now the whistle of the approaching train was heard, the red lamps of the locomotive were visible, and two minutes after the special train drew up before the assembled municipality. The window of the first-class carriage was down, but no one was visible inside.

The mayor was in a great state of embarrassment. Is it the Crown Prince? Is it the President? It is plainly the Crown Prince, for the President would have already shown himself at the window. The mayor cleared his throat, made a low bow before the empty window, and spoke as follows:—

'Your Imperial Majesty, the rep . . . representatives of your fai . . . faithful town of Y—— have assembled here to wel . . . welcome your Imperial Majesty with all . . . all . . .'

Here the mayor forgot the next word, and there was a short pause. But still no one appeared at the window, only from the inside of the carriage sounded forth a loud snoring of a by no means Imperial character and the low growling of a dog.

The guard, meanwhile, had got down from his box, and with unbounded surprise was contemplating the festive scene.

'But, gentlemen ——,' he was upon the point of saying, when the mayor, who still stuck in his speech, and could not for the life of him remember what came next, with a sign of despair waved his hand to the musicians, and the band at once struck up a patriotic tune, while the town councillors cheered and shouted 'Long live his Imperial Highness! Hurrah! hurrah!'

Now at last there was a movement in the carriage, and at the window there appeared the sleepy and astonished form of Peter Pott.

The guard, laughing heartily, flung open the carriage door, and out came our Peter—his basket on his back, his stick in his hand; then turning round once more, he cried out into the carriage, 'Come along, Spitz! come!'

Somewhat amazed, Peter passed by the gentlemen of the town council, raised his cap, and said,—

'Good evening, gentlemen!'

The mayor in his horror let his hat fall from his hands, and the faces of the municipality lengthened in the most portentous manner.

'That is indeed,' stammered one, 'that is, indeed, Peter Pott the blacksmith! and by a special train!'

'At your service, gentlemen!' said Peter, as he hurried quickly onward; for the whole affair seemed to him to have something very mysterious in it.

Enlightened by the guard, the petrified attitude of the deputation soon melted into an endless burst of laughter. The unhappy mayor alone did not laugh. He tore his white cravat from his throat, put it in his pocket, and rushed through the brightly illuminated and decorated town to the Town-hall. Hence he sent forth all the policemen and criers through the place to counter-order the festivities.

For the banquet the landlord of the 'Fortuna' had to be paid from the town funds.

'Wait, Peter Pott, I will not forget this against you!' said the incensed mayor, very fiercely.

Poor Peter, as if he were at all to blame for it! He walked through the gaily-decorated town quite unsuspicious that all this splendour had been put forth in his honour, while he himself was by no means in a festive frame of mind; for he was thinking of the solemn reception he should receive at home when he told his Marianne the story of how he had paid twenty-five thalers for a special train.

And as an honest man he did so that very evening; he would not have slept, indeed, had he concealed it from his old woman.

Whether a storm burst, or whether the beautiful handkerchief, the silk apron and cap, served as lightning conductors to carry it off, we have never learned. Next morning, indeed, Marianne had very red eyes, and Peter hammered away in his smithy as if his anvil had been to blame for the whole affair.

But when the neighbours brought the news that all the festivities, the music, the deputation, the illumination, and everything, was in Peter's honour, the sunshine returned to Marianne's face, and she could not help laughing heartily. But Peter held out his hand, and said,—

'Old woman, my hand upon it, that is the last time such a thing will happen!'

But the mayor cannot forget the matter, and still bears a grudge against Peter Pott. J. F. C.

THE CHAMOIS.

THIS elegant creature is a member of a very large and important family called the Antelopes. This family consists of nearly seventy species, upwards of fifty being found nowhere except in Africa. The whole of America, North and South, contains but one species, so strangely are animals distributed. The antelope family is distinguished by the round, hollow horn, 'annulated;' that is, surrounded by rings. They are also well known for their exceeding grace and surprising dexterity. The springbok leaps perpendicularly upward six or seven feet, simply, as it seems, for its own amusement. The koodoo can clear a door of ten feet high at a single bound. The chamois can descend in two or three leaps a rock of twenty or thirty feet, without the smallest projection on which to rest. The shape of the horns varies much in the different groups of the antelope. Some are 'lyrated;' that is, they bend backwards and then point forward, so as to assume the shape of the old lyre, the sides of which were often made of the gazelle's horns. Some are twisted into a spiral form. Some are but three inches long, as in the case of the Abyssinian madoqua, the whole animal being no bigger than an English hare. Other horns, as that of the South African koodoo, are four feet in length and extremely beautiful. All the antelopes have a most delicate sense of smell, and few quadrupeds can equal them in fleetness. The swiftest greyhounds are left behind, and the hunters in the East employ the hawk and the cheetah, a sort of tiger, for the chase. The antelopes live in herds, and are very careful not to be surprised, placing sentinels to watch and give alarm. The eye, large and brilliant, is another feature that marks the tribe. Dorcas, which is the Greek and Roman name for the gazelle, means 'To see.' Antelope signifies 'Bright eyes;' and when a lover in the East wishes to pay his lady a compliment he says, 'You have the eyes of an antelope.'

Among the better-known antelopes we may mention the nyl ghau; the pretty little gazelle; the springbok, or 'showy goat,' the most beautifully varied in its colours of all; the chamois, familiar to tourists in the Alps; and the gnu, perhaps the strangest of all, the head and horns being like the buffalo, the tail, neck, and mane like the horse, while the body and limbs resemble those of the stag.

Our illustration shows us several young chamois, standing amid the crags and chasms and precipices which they delight in. From the appearance of their horns they are evidently young ones. The horns of the full-grown chamois are quite black and smooth, and formed like a perfect hook, with very sharp points. These elegant creatures are the only animals of the antelope kind to be found in Western Europe. They choose for their home the loftiest mountains. They dislike heat, and in the summer time they frequent the cold upper regions of the everlasting hills, either the lofty peaks or those valleys where the snow never melts. In the winter time, however, the cold of those bleak solitudes seems too much for them, spite of their long hair and thick coat of fine wool, and they descend to the lower regions. It is then, and then only, that the hunter has any chance of capturing them. It is said they can scent a man a mile and a half off, and their restlessness and suspicion are extreme. At the prospect of danger they are off and away, racing at an incredible speed—scaling crags with the most amazing agility, and leaving the pursuer far behind. They are usually taken by a party of hunters, who surround the glen where they are and advance toward each other until the herd is hemmed in on all sides. The flesh of the antelope is like venison. No animal ought to provide sweeter meat than the chamois, when we think what he feeds upon. Mountain herbs and flowers, and tender shoots from tree and shrub—such is his food. He drinks very little, but that little is sparkling water, while the air which reddens his blood is the purest in the world. G. S. O.

Chamois.

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Chatterbox.

"Well, young gents, are you coming to the meet this morning?"

HALT!

(*Continued from page 67.*)

CHAPTER XII.

THE Colonel went away next morning by an early train up to London, and was not to come back till the next day, so we were left to our own devices. Everything seemed more cheerful than it had done the night before. The Colonel looked more like himself as he drove off to the station in the dog-cart, telling us to take care of ourselves, and not to kill ourselves, each other, or any one else, if we could possibly help it, while he was away. Frank, too, was better, though his eyes were still red; and though I was quite as sorry for him as ever, still I felt that really the kindest thing to do was to help him to forget his trouble, and that the best way to do that was to forget it myself.

The frost was quite broken up, and it was only here and there that patches of snow were to be seen, under a hedge or along the side of a bank. 'Waiting for their brothers,' Mrs. Cheviot said; 'a sure sign that more snow would come when patches were left unmelted.' It was quite sunny and bright that day, and in the warm border by the holly hedge the points of the snowdrops were coming up through the black mould, reminding one of spring coming before very long.

As we were looking at them, Mostyn passed along the road in his hunting-coat, and called out a brisk 'Good morning' to us over the hedge.

'Well, young gents, are you coming to the meet this morning?'

'Oh! I say,' said Frank, 'why shouldn't we? Where is it to-day?'

'At Oatlands Farm,' was the answer. 'We shall draw the deep covers, and we always find there; so you're sure of a good run.'

'Come on, Frank!' I cried; 'this *is* stunning, and no mistake!'

So off we tore into the house to tell Mrs. Cheviot, who received the news with her usual disapproval.

'Well, I know as it's no use my saying anything, if you're set on it; but whatever you can find to like in tiring yourselves to death and tearing your clothes off your backs, following a rubbishy old fox, as is no use to any one when he *is* caught, beats *me*! You'd best each put a lump of cake in your pockets, for there's no saying when you'll get a chance of a bite or sup of anything.'

We accepted the grumbling and cake together, while we laced on our stoutest boots, and then went to the wood-house to provide ourselves with good strong sticks. Bertie was only to go as far as Oatlands Farm, where our old friend, Mrs. Blossom, lived, and would be delighted to see him; but Frank and I were resolved to be in at the death, even if we had a hundred miles to go: and Frank went so far as to promise Polly the brush to wear in her Sunday bonnet, while I had set my affections on the head, to take back to father for the study. We had quite a warm discussion as to who should dress the head for us, and whether the mouth should be open or shut, and got quite fierce over it, till we suddenly recollected that the fox had to be found, and hunted, and killed, before any one could have either head or brush.

Oatlands Farm is three miles from the Hermitage, but we got a lift for half the way, so we were quite fresh when we reached the farm. We were in good time, too, for the hounds passed us just as we came in sight of it, and there were pink coats coming up in all directions.

'We shall have a large field to-day,' said Mostyn; 'there always is after a long frost. Sorry not to see the Colonel here to-day.'

We went in to have a chat with Mrs. Blossom, and found her clacketing about her dairy on pattens, as fat, and smiling, and busy as ever; but not too busy to be pleased to see us. But we had not much time to stop gossiping, for the horn sounded outside, and the hounds were jogging off across the meadow opposite the farm to the coverts, and quite a procession of horsemen after them.

There were horses of all descriptions and sizes—and riders, too. Dandies got up to within an inch of their lives—*such* swells! Pink coats, without a spot or crease in them, and snow-white buckskin breeches, and velvet caps, and a hothouse flower in their buttonholes; and *such* horses! with glossy satin coats, and slender dainty legs, and small heads, and nostrils showing red inside them, like a rocking-horse. 'But, bless you!' Mostyn said, 'you don't see none of them at the death. Not *them*, pretty dears! They just goes across a field or two, if there's a gate handy, and at the first stiff fence they remember they've business at home, and just trot off quiet to lunch. Why, they'd faint at a bullfinch, pretty near!'

I laughed at this, for I thought a man must be a muff who was afraid of a bird; but I wondered why a bullfinch in particular.

'But,' I said, 'I haven't seen any bullfinches about here. They don't seem common in these parts.'

'Not seen 'em? Why, that shows as you've not been across country. I don't know any country where there's more of them, or closer together, too. Why, there's one,' pointing with his whip in one direction; 'and there's another,' pointing the opposite way; 'and there's a third. We've not got to go far, Master Tom, to find them.'

'Where?' I said; 'I don't see:' for it seemed to me that the first time he pointed to a rook—at any rate a much bigger bird than a bullfinch: and the second time to a rabbit; and the third time I couldn't see anything at all on the hedge.

'Well, to be sure!' said Mostyn; 'I think this young gent don't know a bullfinch when he sees one—eh! Master Frank?'

'That I do!' I said; 'I'm not such a duffer as that.' But I changed the subject, and it was well that I did, for I found out that in hunting slang a bullfinch means a fence, and not a bird at all.

This conversation had taken place one day at the kennels; for Mostyn was far too busy at the meet to have any time to spare for us.

The regular, thoroughgoing old fox-hunters, were not nearly so spruce as those I have described: their coats looked as if they had seen service, and their

horses were mostly big-boned animals, who did not look anything at the meet, nor dance about and show off like the dandies'. But when the run began, didn't they go! with a long stride that took them out of the ruck in no time, and as straight and steady as old Time, over and through everything. 'Not much to look at, but good 'uns to go;' and the riders seemed to pull themselves together, and to be just a part of their horses and nothing else.

Then there were a good many farmers, some on very good horses and some on old stagers that reminded one of the rhyme:—

'A farmer was riding upon his grey mare;
Lumpetty, lumpetty, lump!'

There were doctors riding their brougham-horses; little chaps on Shetland ponies, with stout old coachmen to look after them (if they could); shopkeepers from Meddington, riding knock-kneed livery-stable hacks; farm-boys on raw, half-broken horses, who carried their luckless riders wherever they pleased, and exposed them to no end of abuse from every one by constantly getting in the way and riding over the hounds. And there were a few ladies. I suppose I ought to have put them first, and I beg their pardons; especially one of them, who rode a jolly little chestnut with a white foot, and she was very plucky, and went a-head like anything, and took the fences like a bird. And then there were two little barefooted gipsy-boys on a donkey, who really saw a great deal of the run. I saw the donkey twice rub them off against the side of a rick, and once he got rid of them by rolling; but they were soon on again, and I think the donkey got a good deal of fun out of it, in spite of the blows and tugs. As I ran out of the farm, with Frank after me, post-haste, so as to see the hounds break covert, I nearly fell over a child standing at the farmyard gate.

'Hullo, Nan!' I said, 'whatever are you doing here?'

'Go home!' said Frank; 'you ought to be at school. You'll catch it from your mother, and serve you right too.'

Nan put a corner of her ragged pinafore to her black eyes.

'We can't take you with us, Nan,' I said; 'we're going after the hounds, miles and miles. Look here: you go straight away home, and there's a bit of cake for you;' and I thrust the lump of cake Mrs. Cheviot had given me into her hand: then Frank and I bolted off as quick as we could. I looked round once when we reached the corner, and fancied I still saw her lilac pinafore by the gate, but I soon forgot all about her in the excitement of the chase.

CHAPTER XIII.

Several of the gentlemen who were hunting knew us by sight, from seeing us with the Colonel, and more than one of them spoke to us; one old man on a grey horse in particular was very kind, and said if we'd stick by him, he'd put us up to a wrinkle or two, for he had hunted the country for thirty years, and knew pretty well every turn the fox would be likely to take and the short-cuts that saved the horses' legs.

'And you young fellows on two-legged horses must make your heads save your heels if you want to see much of the fun. You'd better keep this side of the wood. The fox is safe to break cover there; any one who knows anything about it is round here, you see. Those young fellows think they know a lot, but take the word of an old campaigner, he'll break just about here and go right away across the open. Foxes don't run against the wind, they know better.'

So we took his advice and waited where we were, and before long we heard a solitary yelp, which was soon taken up by other dogs, and swelled at last into a regular chorus from the whole pack.

'There you are!' said our old friend. 'That's old President's note I reckon, and there's no mistake about him.' And sure enough, the next minute the fox slipped quietly out of the brushwood not fifty yards from us, and set off at a trot along by the side of a hedgerow, in the direction the old man had pointed out as his probable course. Frank and I gave the 'view halloo' with an energy that made our old friend laugh. 'Good lungs, my lads! but you'd better keep your breath to cool your porridge; you'll want all the wind you've got, and more too.'

Then the hounds came pouring out of the covert, with their noses to the ground, as if they could not have seen the fox, half across the field in front of them, and all giving tongue with that cry which I always think must make the fox shiver, it sounds so bloodthirsty and cruel.

But there was no time to think of anything, for we were off; and there was such a crowd of horses, and all more or less excited and plunging, that we had to look sharp to avoid being crushed or knocked down. We were among the first, as we were so close to where the fox broke covert, so we kept up famously, being both of us good runners; but the field soon began to thin. First of all, those who had only come to see the covert drawn, drew off. Then some followed along the road, and some made off towards gates. Only a few went straight ahead over hedges and ditches. The fox kept straight as a dart at first, and if he had gone on so we should soon have been left behind; but fortunately for us, just as the first horse was out of sight and we found ourselves being left in the lurch, he doubled and came back into the same field with us, so we again got a good start.

(To be continued.)

THE SCALDINO.

It is often very cold in southern Italy during the winter months, even Vesuvius wears a snow covering at times, and the warmth-loving Neapolitans are driven to their only substitute for a fire, the scaldino, or brazier. Fancy a metal or crockery dish filled with wood ashes, with a ledge round it on which you rest your feet, and you have what is often the only means even a rich man in Naples has of warming himself.

The scaldino has one great advantage: it is easily carried about, so that the poor cobbler in the street may enjoy one as well as the rich: but it requires attention to keep it active, and a fan answers the purpose of a bellows in this case.

In addition to the larger scaldino, Neapolitan

The Scaldino.

ladies carry about with them pretty crockery baskets, filled likewise with the wood ashes, as hand-warmers.

To our English feelings all these contrivances do not make up for a good warm fire, and where the English find their way, stoves and open fire-places are beginning to creep in; but you may still wander through dozens of beautiful palaces, rich in marble and gilding, and find no better plan for warming it than the scaldino. H. A. F.

TWO WAYS OF WORKING.

'IS that father's boat, Hannah, out there? When shall I be big enough to help him with her?'

The question was addressed to a plain, sensible-looking woman, a fisherman's wife of Silver Chine.

The little girl and boy climbing the grassy cliff on either side of her, though they clung to her with all the trust and love of childhood, were not her own; and a second glance at their faces betrayed the

"The little girl and boy on either side of her were not her own."

fact that, despite their simple, almost coarse clothing, they were of gentle blood. Robert Rowsell himself looked upon them as his own, though he would sometimes say, 'Hannah will have it so; since they are her late mistress's children: though why poor folk should have to keep the children of the gentry I can't say.'

Hannah and Robert Rowsell did not see quite alike in this affair of these desolate children. Hannah's view being expressed in her answer to little Gerald Denison's question.

'That isn't father's boat, Gerry; and when you are big you are not to be a fisher-lad, but a clergyman or lawyer, you know.'

'Like father,' said his sister Adeline. 'Hannah, shall I be ever like mother, and play music, and be clever, and a lady? Tell me about her.'

And then Hannah sat down on the hill-side and told the children all she thought good to say of the young father and mother, who had left their children with faithful Hannah in her pleasant little home by the sea, while they sought health during the winter in a softer climate. But with the spring came a little messenger of sorrow, a black-edged letter from the chaplain at Malaga. Mr. Denison, the consumptive young clergyman, was dead; and his wife, worn out with grief and the fatigues of nursing him, had only survived him a fortnight.

Mrs. Denison had married against the consent of her parents, and Mr. Denison had no near relations; so Hannah was hardly surprised to find, as months rolled on, that no one claimed her little wards, and that they were altogether thrown on her hands.

Her first difference with her husband took place at this time; he wanted the children placed in an orphan asylum till such time as they should be able to gain their own living: but Hannah was firm, she had promised to be a mother to them—'till you see me again,' was poor weeping Mrs. Denison's last request.

'And if I meet her Above, and I have failed in my promise, how would it be with me?' said Hannah, gently but decidedly. 'No, Robert, we have none of our own, and I feel as if God had sent us these children to care for.'

So time passed, and the children stayed on in the cottage at Silver Chine. Good children, and loving, they were; but there was always a something that kept Robert at a distance from them. They called him 'father,' because Hannah did so; a touching little remembrance of the days when he was father to their very own little one, who was born and died and buried in one short week, soon after the young Denisons' arrival: but it was Hannah who made life pleasant to them.

Robert was inclined to believe that he was foolishly soft in working for these penniless children of the upper classes, who were none of his.

Little Gerald was at first puzzled and then mortified by his foster-father's sneers, when he began to understand them.

'Let me help with the boat!' had been now his cry for some time.

'Nay, you're to be a fine gentleman!' Robert would answer. 'You are not to soil your fingers with working for your living!'

And poor Gerald, stung by the tone, would run to Hannah with his hot face for explanation.

'You are to be a gentleman, dear, God willing; because you come of a gentle race, and can't help it: but you needn't be a fine gentleman, and of course you will have to work when you are old enough. Yes, take father down the basket he has forgotten, and never mind if he is a bit vexed; the wind is contrary, and the lad that helps him has run off truant: that's enough to worry any one.' So Hannah would try to soothe her boy's wounded feelings.

She was very wise and watchful this foster-mother, and let no chance slip for securing instruction for her charges. Sometimes it was a visitor (and they were few at Silver Chine), who, attracted by the fair faces of the little pair, would ask their story and offer assistance; and then Hannah would beg advice how to teach her little ones, and often find that her questioner would give valuable aid in books, or even personal teaching.

At ten and twelve Gerald and Lena were better taught than many children of the upper classes, and Gerald was beginning to be really fond of working out a problem and conquering a difficult lesson. Only Robert marred the family happiness by his sneers.

'How long are we to keep our young gentleman in idleness?' he would ask sometimes, and, now that Gerald and Lena understood that they were utterly dependent on the charity of this cottage home, the question was a galling one.

In vain Gerald begged to be allowed just to be Robert's boy, and go out all day in the fishing-boat. But Hannah was firm. 'You will help us better, lad, with your head than with your hands, and Robert will live to own it,' she declared; 'so go on working at your books and never mind a hard word or two, Robert is good in the main,' sighed the poor woman.

How much she had to bear of her husband's complaining she never told her little ones.

There was peace in the house for the long year when gentle little Lena sickened of her father's malady, and wasted quietly away on the hearth-side; dying at last leaning against Robert's shoulder.

But the hard winter that followed was a trial; the illness had caused expenses, and Robert grumbled that Gerald should still be allowed to attend the day-school in the nearest town, going in the early morning and coming back late, since it was some distance from Silver Chine. True, the master gave him free instruction, detecting a promising pupil in him; 'but Gerald was fourteen now and ought to be making his own living,' said the fisherman.

Just at this time Gerald had begun to feel in himself that he had abilities superior to most boys of his age, and this, far from making him conceited, only roused in him a delightful thought that some day he might live to repay Robert Rowsell all the money he seemed to have unwillingly spent on him.

The master of his school had pointed out to him a plan for studying at a certain public school, where scholarships and such-like benefits might easily be obtained by a clever lad like Gerald.

The lad was full of it. It was in the twilight of an autumn evening that he hastened home, anxious to tell all his hopes to Hannah; but she was not there. He hurried to the shore; Robert and his boy were getting out the boat, and Gerald proffered his help, taking off his jacket as he spoke.

But his foster-father was in no happy mood, and ignoring Gerald, he said to the fisher-lad,—

'We want no fine scholars here; do we, Jim? There's bad weather coming on, Master Gerald, and I advise you to get home to the chimney-corner and the woman-kind, and the book-learning.'

Poor Gerald felt half crushed, half furious, at the taunt before the rough fisher-boy; but he swallowed his resentment and sauntered away.

To have answered Robert as he would have liked, would have grieved Hannah. But oh! to escape from all this! It must be done.

'I can't make him understand,' said poor Gerald, aloud; 'that I mean to work. I am working, though not just in the one only way he knows of. He thinks me wanting in spirit. Well, it is hard to bear, but Hannah knows better.'

And to Hannah the boy went for comfort.

That night the wind rose fast and furious: Robert was right, the sunset meant no good.

His wife sat trembling in the window of the cottage, listening to the roaring of the sea and longing for his safe return. He was still the husband of her heart, though by his odd temper, as she called it, he was driving out her nursling, her only child. For Gerald had made up his mind and bade her pack his clothes; he would be off in the morning to Alcester, where the great school was to which he was bound. The master he had worked under of late had a brother in office there, and Gerald was to go to him.

The boy pushed aside the purse Hannah brought out for him: he would have none of Robert's money, he thought, in his young pride. So Hannah packed it in his box; it was her own savings for some such need, and returned to her watch in the window.

It was close on morning when, worn out with suspense, she got her boy to come up the cliff with her in the raging wind and rain, to look for the father's boat.

The cold grey dawn struck a chill into the boy's heart. What if Robert Rowsell had perished in the storm, and he still full of unkind thoughts of his foster-father! There was no boat to be seen on all the wide troubled waste of waters. Hannah wrung her hands and cried aloud.

The strong, sensible woman, despaired at last.

And now Gerald sustained her.

'Mother, don't!' he pleaded, 'there is yet hope; they may have got under the lee of the Chimneys.'

The Chimneys were a chain of rocks stretching out into the sea, in parts covered by the water, but every now and then breaking into fanciful square turrets, giving rise to the name which the fishermen had bestowed on them.

But no, there was no boat sheltering behind them; but still Gerald gazed and gazed, and finally led Hannah down to the shore, to the very spot where the waters boiled and raged over the first spur of this rocky chain.

'Give me the brandy-bottle, mother,' he said hurriedly. 'It may be nothing, and yet behind the third chimney I see what looks strange. If I wave my handkerchief to you it will be father! Go back instantly to the village and get some of the men to follow me; with ropes they dare do it.'

'But you are going without!' cried the agonized woman. 'Gerald, you will never do it! the rocks are so slippery and the sea is so high!'

'Mother, it is my duty,' said Gerald, gravely. 'I am going to father; it is he; and he might be dead or washed off those rocks if I waited. Good-bye!'

And the boy was off, cautiously treading his way along the perilous ridge.

Hannah hid her eyes once when he tottered and half fell, and then she watched him breathlessly, for a false step meant death. He passed the first chimney, the second—then he was out of sight a moment; but at last she saw him at the foot of the third, stooping, pausing, and then—yes! waving his handkerchief—

The woman flew back to the village, waiting no further signal.

And Gerald? It was indeed the battered, senseless form of his foster-father he had found on the cruel rocks; the cold refuge he must have struggled for when he missed making for harbour.

The boy feared he might be dead, but a feeble moan from the poor man relieved him: he could only moisten his father's lips with the brandy, for his strength was unequal to dragging him even out of the spray of the waters. There was no boat, no boy, to be seen; alas! both had been swallowed by the cruel sea. It seemed like hours before Hannah came back to the beach with men and ropes, and cheery voices fell on Gerald's ear, as the willing helpers trod warily the difficult path to the Chimneys. Robert Rowsell yet lived, and was carefully borne to his cottage-home.

* * * * *

Nature changes but slowly, and Silver Chine, with its craggy sides and lovely peep of ocean, looked much the same one summer's day seven years after the stormy autumn in which Gerald's foster-father nearly lost his life. He had been a maimed, helpless creature ever since that day, and yet, as he sat reading the newspaper in an arm-chair by the open window, he looked a happier man than of old.

'His name's here at the top, Hannah,' he was saying, joyfully. 'Who would have thought our lad would be the talk of the country for his cleverness?'

'I did, Robert,' said Hannah, smiling, and leaning over her husband's shoulder to read the dear name, and to see it written in real newspaper-print, that her boy had carried off the best honours of the university.

Gerald had indeed made his way in the world since we left him, a despised, helpless boy.

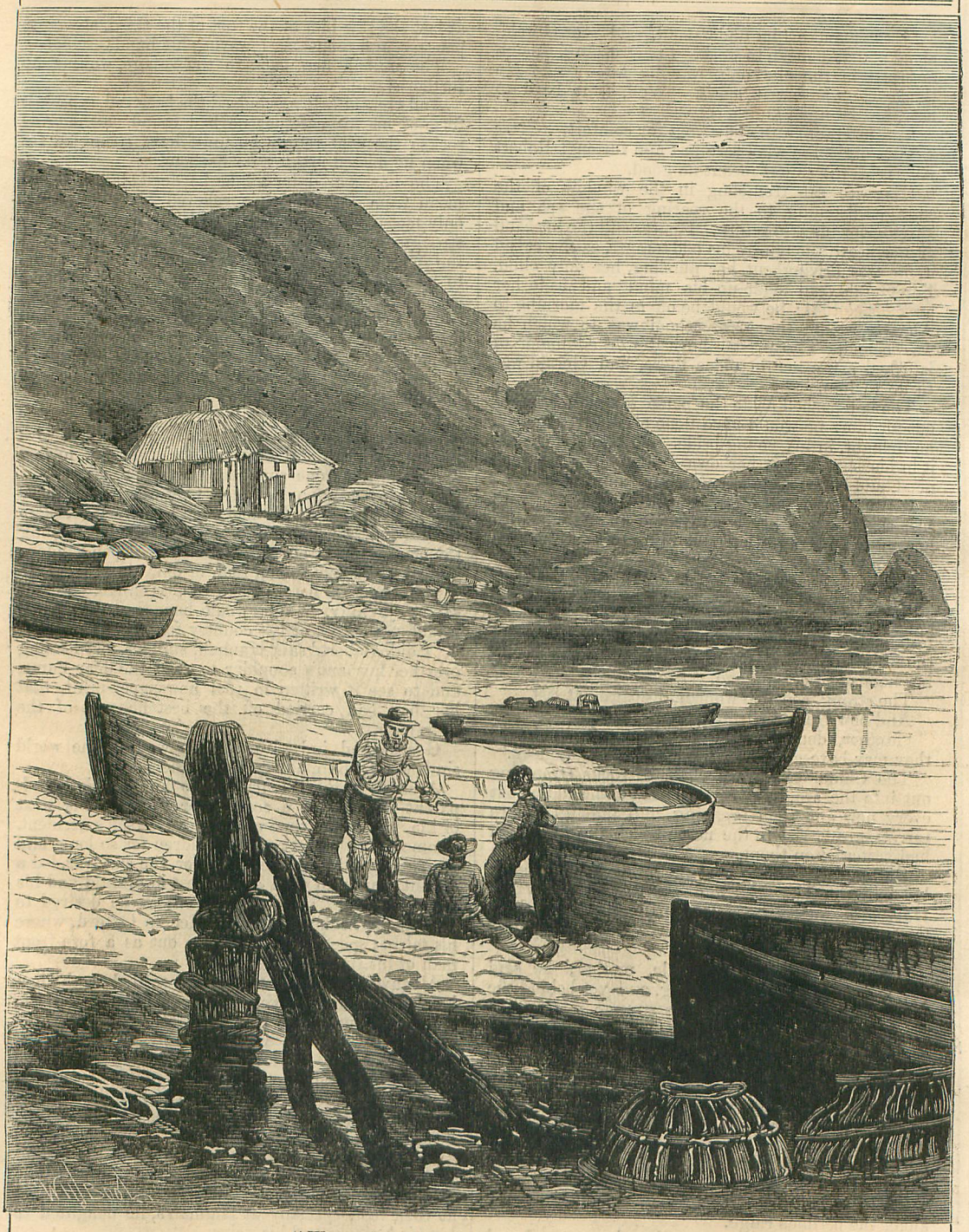
A small sum of money left to him by his grandparent had led to a search for him by his next of kin, just at the time of Robert Rowsell's accident. Shame at the neglect of the children for so long, and perhaps a little real affection for the survivor, led a distant cousin to take an interest in Gerald and his foster-parents. The boy was sent as he desired to Alcester School, and from thence to Oxford, where his talents speedily marked him out as a fore-front man of his time.

Meanwhile a small annuity was settled on the now helpless fisherman, whose cottage Gerald still insisted on considering his home. The 'fine gentleman' Robert had once so tauntingly alluded to, was now a cherished visitor in the tiny household, and life was brightened to the invalid in his absence by his letters, and the from time to time honourable mention of his name in the newspapers which Robert delighted to pore over.

A great spur to Gerald's exertions was the feeling that he had some one to work for. Robert and Hannah were father and mother still to him, and at their feet, specially at Hannah's, he delighted to lay his honours and his gains.

As Hannah had said years before, Robert came to see that work may be done with the head as well as with the hands.

H. A. F.



"We want no fine scholars here; do we, Jim?"

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Chatterbox.

He came out smeared with mud from head to foot."

HALT!

(*Continued from page* 75.)

WE found the ploughed land rather heavy work, and some of the meadows were quite boggy with the late thaw, and the horses evidently felt the same. 'Our old man,' as we called him, did not forget his promise to us, and we found it was always safe to follow his advice, for he seemed to know by magic what the fox would do next. When we saw him drawing away from the rest we always followed him, for it was sure to be some dodgy short-cut that brought us out just where we wanted to be. It was a capital run, and, luckily for us, the fox often doubled, so we did not get away very far from Oatlands. I did not notice this at the time, as we might have been miles away for all I knew, and I was too much excited to think of such dull things as time and distance. I did not know the country well either, for though I had spent a summer at Oatlands Farm, we had never gone beyond the meadows by the river, or in the direction of Meddington.

It is no use trying to describe the run, I should take too long; and perhaps it would not be interesting to any one who was not there. I saw a man pitched clean over his horse's head into a pond, and he came out smeared with mud from head to foot; and there was another horse whose rider could not manage him at all—nothing would tempt him to take any fence, though his rider rode him at them again and again, and then all at once he took matters into his own hands and took the young gentleman home, much against his will, leaping a five-barred gate on the way as easily as if it had been a molehill.

I said to Mostyn afterwards, 'That was a queer sort of horse!'

To which he replied with a wink, 'And a queer sort of rider.'

'I should not like to have ridden such a horse.'

'And I should not have liked to carry such a man. Why, Master Tom! horses knows who's on them as well as Christians! He'd have gone well enough with any one else.'

It must have been getting on in the day I suppose, when at length it really seemed as if we had seen the last of the hunt and were to be left behind for good and all. We had come to a bit of rough common land and had only clambered through a quickset hedge of gorse in time to see all the horses disappear down a slope about a quarter of a mile off, among some trees. Frank and I had kept together nearly the whole time, and now we stood for a minute to get breath and see which way we had better take.

'Come on,' Frank cried, 'we shall pick them up again; you're not beat yet?'

'Beat! no, I'm game for twice as much!'

And we were just starting afresh when our old man came riding leisurely up, as if fox-hunting were the most leisurely, jog-trot thing under the sun.

'Well he said, 'not had enough yet? Then you can't do better than stop where you are. It's no use trying to catch them up, for they're a good half mile away by now; but you wait a bit. I never knew a fox yet who went into the lakes without making a regular round of them and coming back. They call those flat meadows there "the lakes;" no one knows why, except because there's no water. "*Lucus a non lucendo*," there's a bit of Latin for you, my young classics. It's a rough bit of riding down there, with the broken ground and loose stones by the old chalk-pits, and my old Carnaby is glad to get out of it. Eh, old fellow? And it's no better running than riding either. So you stop here and breathe yourselves, and see if I am not right again. I'll give them twenty minutes to be round, and I shall come back and meet them.'

So saying, he jogged off again in the opposite direction, and Frank at once seated himself on the bank and brought out his bit of cake.

'I wonder what o'clock it is, Tom?' he said; 'my inner man thinks it's lunch-time. It's no use looking at the impostor, worse luck to it!'

Frank's watch generally went by the name of 'the impostor;' but it had certainly gone through enough to ruin the character of any watch. All through last summer holidays it had been used as a plummet out fishing when the lead was lost; only a few days before it had fallen from the top of the fir-tree down on to the lawn, and once it had actually been boiled in a pudding. It was no wonder that it went in rather an eccentric manner, and Frank used to give the regulator a severe poking with a pin, which, he said, did it no end of good.

'I say,' he went on, 'have a bit of my cake; you gave all yours to that young torment, Nan. Do you know, Tom, I've a great notion she didn't go home after all; I think I saw her clinging on to that carriage that was going along the road with some ladies in it, and I saw something very like her pinafore getting over a stile, not half an hour ago. She's an audacious young monkey, as Mrs. Cheviot says.'

'Oh, it can't be her,' I said; 'she'd be afraid to go such a way from home as this; and as to pinafores, all the girls have pinafores like that, only they're not often so grubby. I don't want any cake, I'm not hungry!' (This was not quite true, but I was not going to take away Frank's lunch.) 'It's rather slow waiting about here, isn't it? I wonder if they really will come back; what a sell it will be if they don't!'

'Oh, depend upon it, they will,' Frank answered, with his mouth full of cake, stretching out his legs comfortably; 'our old man knows well enough. Come and sit down and take it easy, Tom.'

'I think I'll just go across to those trees and see if I can see anything of them; one might catch a glimpse of them and find out which way they are going.'

'All right,' said Frank. 'I shall stop here; I've more faith in our old man. Give my love to the fox, if you meet him, and say I'm waiting for him here.'

So I set off across the bit of common. Frank called after me before I was out of hearing, 'I say, Tom, don't go! it's no good.' But I did not pay any attention, and went on by myself.

I think it was partly because I was hungry, and

did not like to sit by while he ate his cake; but when I was once off, I thought what fun it would be to catch them up, and what a laugh I should have at Frank if I was in at the death, while he sat quietly waiting for them!

So I quickened my pace, and was soon across the common and through the trees, and out on the rough ground beyond, which our old man had described. I stopped to listen for the cry of the hounds, but could not hear anything, so I made for a little bit of high ground a short way off, where I should be able to look round and get a view over the lakes. It was certainly a very rough road, and I could see by the tracks how the horses had floundered about in the mud among the heaps of stones and furze-bushes, and I picked up a lady's riding-whip with a silver handle, trampled in the mud. It was drier as I climbed up the mound, and when I reached the top—yes—there was the hunt; about half a mile off across the lakes; a splendid burst across the open, the fox going gallantly still, the hounds in full cry and about twenty hunters well up with them. If they kept on as they were going now they would pass along a lane which I saw a little way to my right. In less than five minutes I could reach the very place where they would come out. I had only to make my way through the thick gorse and brambles down the bank before me and across two fields and I should be there. Five minutes? it would not take two; but I must make haste, for the cry of the hounds came nearer and nearer.

I sprang forward, and laughed to think how Frank was left in the lurch, and how mistaken our old man had been, for they were evidently not going anywhere near where he had said they would. How thick the gorse was! I had to push, and struggle, and elbow. And was it not prickly, too? One more good push, and I shall be clear and able to take to my heels! Now for it! One to make ready—two to prepare—three to be off—and four to be——

CHAPTER XIV.

Drip, drip, *drop;* drip, drip, *drop*. It was water falling on stones, and there was always the emphasis on the third drop.

This was the first thing I remember, as I came slowly back to consciousness, and I lay for a minute or two counting the drops—one, two, three; one, two, three; and wondering if the water-bottle on the washing-stand had been upset. But presently it flashed upon my mind that I certainly was not in bed at the Hermitage, and I opened my eyes and found that I was lying on some soft mud at the bottom of a chalk-pit, where a fall of about twenty feet had landed me. I sat up, feeling dazed and stupid, and looked round me. I was covered with damp mud from head to foot, and I had a bruise on my leg and shoulder and the back of my head, but otherwise I was not hurt by the fall. It must have stunned me, but I had no means of knowing how long I had lain there. My hat lay near me and the lady's whip was still in my hand, and there were some freshly fallen stones and boughs, which had evidently come down with me.

The side of the chalk-pit rose steep above me, overhanging a little at the top, where the furze-bushes, which had so deceived me, clustered thickly, and bent over the pit as if they were looking after me. The side of the pit was full of holes where the chalk had been dug out, with great green stains of damp, and nearer the top roots came poking out, and bare branches of ivy, and in one place water was trickling through. It was a bad fall and a wonder that I did not break my neck, or at any rate an arm or leg, but the soft mud must have saved me. I began to wonder how long I had been there, and what had become of the hunt. I listened but I could hear no sound of it, nothing but the dropping of the water. They must have gone clean away now, and there was no hope of being in at the death, or seeing any more of it; so there was no need to hurry, and I felt so stiff and shaken that I was glad to sit still a bit, with my back against the chalky side, before I started on my return home. So I watched a rat that came out of a hole near me, and looked at me with bright-eyed surprise as a bold intruder on his own property, and I wished Rags were there to wake him up a bit.

All at once an idea occurred to me and I sprang to my feet, forgetting all about my tiredness and stiffness in a minute.

How was I to get out? Not by the way I came—that was simply impossible; and both to right and left of me the sides were quite high and steep, and more overhanging. The only chance was at the other end. Here there had evidently once been the way of getting in and out of the pit; there was still a rotten board that looked like part of a ladder, and a rusty wheel where a pulley had been. But a bit of the chalk had fallen, and though it was not so high, it was as hopeless as the rest, and there was a deep pool of water at that end.

No way of getting out! I did not arrive at this dreadful certainty till I had gone round and round the pit hundreds of times, till I had examined every crack and corner, till I had pulled down every branch and root I could reach, which seemed to give the least hold for a climb, till I had got wet through in the deep water and bruised myself by falling back in vain attempts to reach impossible places. I *must* get out somehow! It *can't* be impossible! But every moment made it plainer that I could *not* get out, and that it *was* impossible.

(To be continued.)

WINTER.

THE summer flowers have passed away,
The corn is garnered now,
And the cold earth is covered o'er
With frozen coat of snow.

Yes, autumn's fruits are gathered in,
Winter is come again,
And frost, and cold, and bitter winds,
Are in its dismal train.

And thus it is as on the road
Two children pass together;
They both seem poor and thinly clad
For such keen cutting weather.

Winter.

The one, a boy of noble form
And manly gait, appears;
The other is a bonny lass,
But yet of tender years.

As they trudge on, her hand in his,
'It is so nice!' he cries.
'But oh, dear Bob, 'tis very cold!'
The little girl replies.

'I'll wrap you in my coat,' he says;
''Twill help to keep you warm
And I can do as well without—
The cold does me no harm.'

'Tis but a tattered garb at best,
But, oh! so kindly given;
We may be sure that simple deed
Is registered in Heaven.

J. H. T.

Sand Storm in the Desert.

WONDERS OF NATURE.

II.—Sand-Storm in the Desert.

THIS terrible Wonder of Nature is seen and felt in those parts of the earth which separate the region of the winter rains from that of the summer rains, and so do not share in either. In the greatest part of this district a drop of rain never falls to refresh the burning soil.

In those desert tracts, which are covered with fine loose sand, the whirlwinds, called Simoom, or Samieli, often blow, during the months of July and August, with great force, and raise a large portion of the sand to a considerable height, and lay it again at some distance. Such pillars of sand have entombed many an unfortunate traveller. 'One of the largest of these pillars of sand,' say Caillié, 'crossed our camp, overset all the tents, and, whirling us about like straws, threw one of us on the other in the utmost confusion. We knew not where we were, and could not distinguish anything at the distance of a foot. The sand wrapped us in darkness like a fog, and heaven and earth seemed all one. While this frightful tempest lasted we remained stretched on the ground, motionless, dying of thirst, burned by the heat of the sand, and buffeted by the wind. We suffered nothing, however, from the sun, whose disk, almost concealed by the cloud of sand, appeared dim, and deprived of its rays.'

But sometimes the Samieli is far more deathly than this. The wind then is said to be pestilential, and its evil effects are almost beyond belief. One traveller says, 'We are warned of its approach by a thick haze, like a cloud of dust arising out of the horizon. We immediately throw ourselves down on our faces, and there remain until the storm is over. We then get up, and look around for our companions, and if we see any motionless, we take hold of an arm or a leg, and pull it with some force. If the man is dead, the limb will come away. If he is not dead, we heap clothes upon him, and force some liquor into his mouth, which produces a perspiration, and he is saved. The bodies of the dead are dissolved into a kind of gelatinous matter, and this is attributed to the noxious vapours which ride on the wings of the storm-wind.'

Another writer, Mr. Aiton, witnessed a sand-storm at some little distance, and he thus describes the scene: 'I saw a number of pillars of sand moving rapidly. They had the appearance of a wheel in quick motion. The tops were sometimes separated from their bodies, being broken in the midst, as if they had been struck by shot from a battery of cannon. Where the rays of the sun shone through them they seemed like pillars of fire, or spotted, as with stars of gold. This pestilential wind, "The breath of the terrible one," as Isaiah calls it, is destructive in a moment. It is like the burning blast of a glowing furnace; its breath is poisonous, and impregnated with death. Sometimes it buries a thousand people and dromedaries in a moment. Though I was not immediately within its reach, the blast that caused it seemed to affect the surrounding atmosphere, producing, for a time, languor, and a degree of indifference to life, with which I could not contend. It is said its heat makes water boil under its immediate influence, and the flesh of those who are killed by it soon becomes black, and begins to fall off the bones. The camels by their instinct are aware of its approach for an hour or two before, and they stand with intense anxiety, ready to bury their heads in the sand till the danger is past. When it strikes the head, the blood gushes in streams from the mouth, ears, and nostrils, as if the blast of the Simoom had been a flash of lightning.'

A third traveller tells us how the morning was delightful when he set out, but the gentle breeze from the south soon increased to a gale, when the sun became obscured, and the loose sand flew about in such whirlwinds that it was impossible to proceed. The party, therefore, halted for an hour, and took shelter under the lee of the camels, who were themselves so terrified as to need fastening by the knees, and uttered in their wailings a melancholy sympathy. 'It seemed to me,' continues the traveller, 'that fifty gales of wind at sea are preferable to one among these sands. It is impossible to imagine desolation more complete. Our beasts, as well as we, were covered, so that breathing was difficult; they hid their faces in the ground, and we could only uncover our own for a moment to behold the chaos of mid-day darkness, and to wait impatiently for its abatement.'

The following lines of Addison were remembered on that occasion, and seemed to possess as much truth as beauty:—

'Lo, where the wide Numidian wastes extend,
Sudden the impetuous hurricanes descend,
Which through the air in circling eddies play,
Tear up the sands, and sweep whole plains away;
The helpless traveller, with wild surprise,
Sees the dry desert all around him rise,
And, smothered in the dusty whirlwind, dies.'

But sublimer poets than Addison have been inspired by scenes like these. We mean the old Hebrew prophets, who, with unspeakable grandeur, have described God, the Avenger of His people, riding, terrible in His wrath, on the wings of the wind, and breathing His fury in the storm. G. S. O.

TREE OYSTERS.

ARE you fond of oysters? I am going to tell you about the oysters which are found in the West Indies, a group of islands between North and South America. These oysters are much smaller than what we see in England. They are found near the lagoons and rivers, chiefly in Porto Rico, in thick clusters around the stems of the mangrove-bushes that grow on the river's side, and also clinging to that part of the bush that dips under water. You have to chop the branches off, and then gather the oysters off the branches and stem. They are rather sweet and very nice, and the people call them 'Tree Oysters.' M. H. F. Donne.

SHUT THE DOOR.

GODFREY Gordon Gustavus Gore—
No doubt you have heard the name before—
Was a boy who never would shut a door!

The wind might whistle, the wind might roar,
And teeth be aching, and throats be sore,
But still he never would shut the door.

His father would beg, his mother implore,
'Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore,
We really do wish you would shut the door!'

Their hands they wrung, their hair they tore,
But Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore
Was deaf as the buoy out at the Nore.

When he walked forth the folks would roar,—
'Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore,
Why don't you think to shut the door?'

They rigged out a shutter with sail and oar,
And threatened to pack off Gustavus Gore
On a voyage of penance to Singapore.

But he begged for mercy, and said, 'No more!
Pray do not send me to Singapore
On a shutter, and then I will shut the door!'

'You will?' said the parents; 'then keep on shore!
But mind you do! For the plague is sore
Of a fellow that never will shut the door—
Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore!'—*Good Things.*

A PIPKIN, A PEN, AND A GLOVE.

IN the large hall of a princely castle in Hungary the eyes of the visitor cannot fail to perceive, amid the most magnificent articles of furniture, three very insignificant and mean objects placed upon costly stands: these are an earthenware pipkin, a pen, and a glove—articles which have great value in the eyes of the noble family for the following reasons.

Some hundred years ago, in the reign of the Empress Maria Thérèsa, there lived a poor, but industrious student, the son of a tailor, who only by means of the assistance of benevolent people was able to devote himself to his studies. After he had completed them he entered a barrister's office as clerk, and not long after it happened that one of the companions of his youth, who belonged to the same village, and had once been his best friend, was condemned to death for an act which he had committed, not through malice, but merely through thoughtlessness, and which in the present day would only be treated as a slight offence, but then was punished with death.

The young man felt the deepest compassion for his unfortunate friend, and he made the resolve to write a petition to the Empress to implore a pardon. This noble action was crowned with success. The Empress was moved to pity by his request, and pardoned the condemned. She inquired for the author of the petition, and at once offered him an important post at court. He willingly accepted the honourable position, and so rose by his industry, his commanding talents, and vast information, through which he won the Empress's favour, that he at last attained the dignity of Hungarian Chancellor.

While he occupied this position he once made an official journey through Hungary, and when passing through a forest his carriage broke down. He left the coachman with the horses, and went in search of some one who could give assistance. A footpath led him deeper into the forest, and then to a solitary house. He entered it and found a lonely inhabitant, to whom he related his distress. He expressed himself as ready to go with him and help him.

During the conversation the Chancellor remarked a glove which lay upon the table, and seemed quite out of character with everything else in the room. The glove was new and fine, while everything else in the apartment looked poor and neglected. His attention was all the more drawn to it, because he perceived how anxious the inhabitant of the cottage was to conceal it.

He suspected that there was something strange connected with this glove, and he determined to trace the mystery; but his manner was quite natural, as if he had remarked nothing. During the following nights he cautiously placed watchmen in the neighbourhood of the house. On the second night a number of persons came singly from different directions to meet at this house in the forest. The watchmen at first supposed that it was a haunt for robbers, but to their surprise they perceived in the clear moonlight that the comers, by their attire and appearance, belonged to the highest ranks of society. The Chancellor was informed of what they had seen. He at once took the necessary measures, and made the discovery that many influential persons of the richest and noblest families in the land had bound themselves together in a wide-spread conspiracy against the reigning Imperial house, and held their meetings in this lonely cottage of the forest.

The Chancellor cautiously set to work to obtain proofs of the guilt of these people, and at once took measures to render the conspiracy void, and to remove all cause of danger to the crown. The Empress brilliantly rewarded him for his faithful services, through which he had saved her life and her throne. She elevated him to the rank of Count, afterwards to that of Prince, and presented him with several large and wealthy estates, among them the castle in which is that splendid hall where the three previously mentioned articles are carefully preserved, because to them the founder of the family owed his greatness and good fortune.

In the earthenware pipkin he had, when a poor student, collected the food which charitable people gave him, in order to render it possible for him to pursue and complete his studies. With the pen which lies beside it he wrote the petition for his friend, which opened the way to his high position at court; and the glove which is shown, is the same which he remarked in the solitary house in the forest which led him to the discovery of the conspiracy, and thus brought him to princely rank and the possession of great estates.

How frequently does Divine Providence make use of the most trifling articles to guide and to establish the fortunes of men! J. F. C.

Watching the House.

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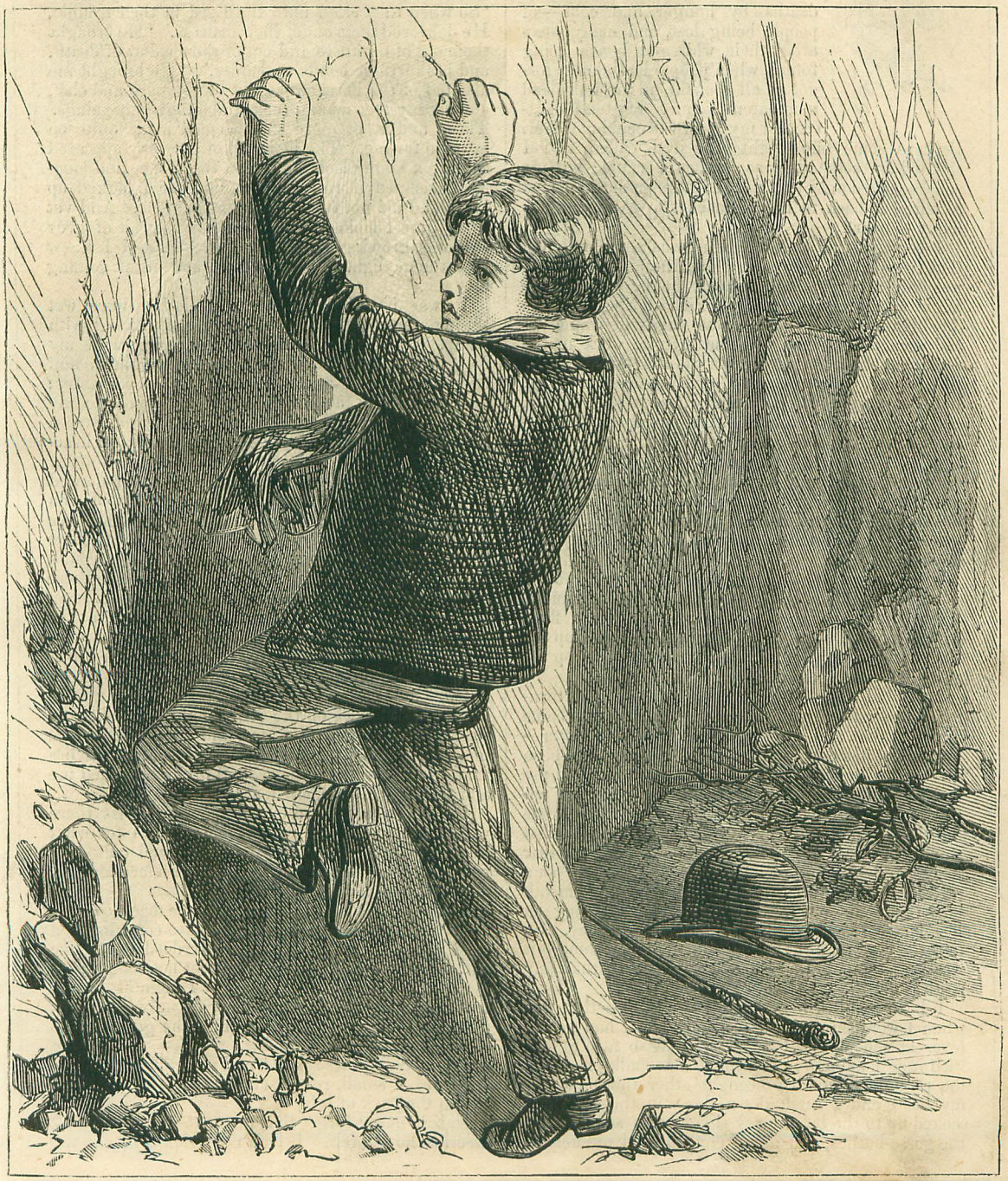
Chatterbox.



Tom in the chalk-pit.

HALT!

(*Continued from page 83.*)

HOW my heart sank! I cannot describe what I felt, and what horrid thoughts came into my mind—stories I had heard of slow lingering deaths by hunger and cold—of people being lost, and many years after their whitened bones being found, when people had almost forgotten all about them; of half-dead men eaten by rats. My teeth chattered in my head with cold and fear. Perhaps some one might hear if I called, and I shouted for some time as loud as I could; but my voice sounded weak and thin, and the pit sides seemed to throw it back to me in mockery. And who was likely to hear?

I remembered that the lane was some way off, that two fields lay between it and the pit, and then it was only a narrow lane among fields, where there might not be any passers-by for days; it was not like the high road, where there was plenty of traffic. I had seen no cottages near, no men at work in the fields; no one had seen me on the hill, no one would look for me, or even know that I was lost till night; and then they would not know where to look for me, as it must be miles from the Hermitage, or even Oatlands Farm.

Then I shouted again, and fancied I heard an answering shout, and listened till the drums of my ears throbbed; and then shouted again till I was hoarse, and whistled as shrilly as I could: but there was nothing but that dreary silence and the water dropping.

Then again I made desperate efforts to climb the sides, but with no better result than before, and I crushed my hand and made it bleed with a flint. And then I threw myself down and covered up my face, and tried to think and to be calm, and stop the great bells that seemed to be going in my ears.

My mind was all in confusion and my head turning, when all at once the thought of mother came into my mind, and it seemed to make things better—just as she has come in sometimes when I have been ill or feverish at night, and put a cool hand on my forehead and smoothed the pillows, and set the untidy sheets straight; or as she used to do when I was a little chap and came crying to her with a sum that would not come right—how she would wash the tear marks and blotches off the slate and set the sum afresh in clear figures, and dry my eyes and smooth back the hair out of them, and then sitting on her footstool the sum was quite plain and easy. So now the very thought of her did me good, though it was something harder than a sum, worse than any restless night, that I had before me.

I have had death near me before now—that day when I went through the ice, and when I had scarlet fever at school, but I never seemed so face to face with it as I did now: all alone in the chalk-pit. And the thought of mother brought other thoughts into my head, and I knelt down there in the mud and looked up to the bit of grey sky I could see between the gorse-bushes, and asked God to send me help in my great danger. I think I felt better after that, not quite so miserable and frightened, and I seemed to have a little bit of hope warm in one corner of my heart, instead of the bitter despair I had felt before. Verses from the Psalms came into my mind that were very consoling:—'Out of the deep have I cried unto Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice.' 'So when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, He delivered them out of their distress.' 'He brought them out of darkness and out of the shadow of death, and brake their bonds in sunder.' 'He brought me also out of the horrible pit, out of the mire and clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and ordered my goings.' These and a lot more that seemed made quite on purpose for me. The little bit of grey sky appeared to have a kindly look, and when the silence and loneliness seemed more than I could bear I looked up there and did not feel quite so much alone. And yet every time I looked I could see how that bit of grey sky was growing darker and greyer, and I knew that the daylight was going fast and night coming on.

It was bitterly cold, for my clothes were wet through, and everything round me streaming with damp. I paced up and down, stamping with my feet to keep something like feeling in them, and flapping my arms like a London cabman in winter; and every now and then I put my hands to my mouth and shouted as loud as I could, and gave a shrill whistle in case any one might be within hearing.

But as I paced up and down a new danger showed itself to me. The water was rising! I told you before that the end where the entrance had once been was full of water, and in two other places there were large pools where water was oozing through the side. Even in the time that I had been there these pools had increased in size and would soon meet and form one large pool, and the water down at the other end certainly came further up the bottom of the pit than it had done; for the whip, which I had thrown down on the ground in my first efforts to get out was now covered with water. I could see by the marks in the sides of the pit that the whole bottom was sometimes full of water, and I thought of the melted snow, and the swollen streams, and full ditches that I had seen everywhere, and my heart failed me and the little bit of hope died out.

I threw myself down on the ground, and lay there with my face hidden in my folded arms for what seemed to me a long time; but it could only have been a few minutes, for every minute seemed an hour at that dreadful time.

Again verses of the Psalms came back to me: 'Save me, O Lord; for the waters have come in, even unto my soul.' 'Let not the waterflood drown me and the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.' And again I got a little comfort and sat up and looked at my friendly bit of sky, which was not yet so dark but that the gorse-bushes showed up clearly against it.

The gorse-bushes! Yes! and something else, too! A head! a small, rough, curly head, with a ragged hat on the back of it!

I shall never forget that moment—never! I can't describe how I felt. I had not cried a bit all the

time in my despair and misery, not even when I thought of death and mother, and of never seeing them again. But now the tears came pouring out in bucketfulls, and I was nearly strangled with the sobs, and my voice was so choked I could scarcely speak, but I managed to gasp out—'Nan! little Nan, is it you?'

Nan, for it was she, gave such a start when I spoke, that she nearly lost her balance and fell over. She was grasping the prickly gorse with both hands and peering down into the pit; but she had not made me out as I thought she had done, for it was as black as pitch looking from above, though my eyes were so used to it that I could see pretty well.

'Nan!' I said again; 'I'm here!'

'It's Master Tom!' she said. 'I thought as I heard some one shout. What are you doing there? Why don't you come out?' she went on. 'It's late, and they're all gone home. Master Frank has been asking for you, but folks said as you'd gone home.'

'I can't get out,' I said. 'And look here, Nan, you must go as hard as you can run to the nearest house and get some one to come with a rope or ladder or something, and say I'm in the old chalk-pit.'

'Which way be I to go?'

'I don't know a bit; the way you came. Anywhere where you know of a house.'

'I'd best bide here,' she said. 'It's getting dark, and I'm afeard on the dark.'

'I shall be drowned,' I said; 'if you don't go, and go quick; for there's water down here and it's rising.'

'I'm afeard,' she went on whimpering; 'and father will give me the stick when I get home. I'd rather bide with you.'

'Father shan't give you the stick,' I answered. 'You don't want me to be drowned, do you?'

'No.'

'Then run as fast as you can, and be sure you tell them to bring a rope.'

And then Nan's head disappeared and I heard her pushing through the bushes, and then I was alone again.

CHAPTER XV.

Though it was my only hope of escape, I was almost sorry at first to lose sight of Nan and no longer to hear her voice. The pit seemed blacker than ever, and the silence more intense after she had gone. The friendly bit of sky was very dark now, but before long two stars came out, soft and bright, like two kind eyes smiling at me. I sat down after Nan was gone, and cried and sobbed like a baby, out of sheer thankfulness and relief; and then I got up and began pacing about again, dancing and stamping and beating my hands together as vigorously as I could, and every now and then listening for the sound of my rescuers, and smiling back at the stars.

But by-and-by a nervous terror came over me that Nan's fear of the darkness and the stick might have proved stronger than her obedience to me, and that she was still lurking about up above, without trying to get help for me. I called out 'Nan!' ever so many times, promising to give her all sorts of things if she would do as I told her, or if she would only just speak to me. Then I thought that perhaps she would wander off somewhere else, and leave me to my fate, or try and go home and lose her way, and be whipped and put to bed, and every one refuse to hear a word she had to say. Or perhaps she might get among people who could not understand what she said, or would not believe her story if they did.

I worked myself up into a perfect agony over all these doubts and fears, and then the water seemed gaining ground so fast. In the places where it had before dripped in slow drops, it now seemed to pour. I could not see the pools, but it appeared as if every time I paced the length of the pit my walk was shorter.

Oh, if they should not come in time! And then a cloud came across and hid the stars, and it began to rain. I think that last half hour was as bad as any. I was quite worn out and exhausted, and I sat down under the overhanging part with my back against the side, and drew up my feet and clasped my hands round my legs, resting my head on my knees, and I think I must have dozed off, though all the time I seemed listening for sounds above that did not come, and hearing only the pattering rain and the trickling water in the pools.

I must have been sleeping, for all at once, without my hearing him or seeing him come, a man was standing before me with a lantern in his hand and a rope round him, and he was shouting 'Here he be, sure enough!' And above there were other lights and voices.

It was one of Farmer Blossom's men who stood there, and his jolly red face looked perfectly dazzling to my dazed, blinking eyes, and I was obliged to turn away from the lantern it was so bright.

'Here, Master Tom! who'd ever have thought of your getting down this old pit? There, hold up a bit; you're stiff and cramped like.'

I just remember clinging to his great, strong, *dry* arm, and seeing that the water had only left a few feet round us uncovered, and then I suppose I fainted, for I don't remember being hauled out of the pit. The next thing I knew of was being carried into the kitchen at Oatlands Farm, by the farmer himself, and hearing him say,—

'And I tell you I won't have him taken a step further to-night, not to please any one. Where's the missus? She'll see to his being taken in hand properly.'

(To be continued.)

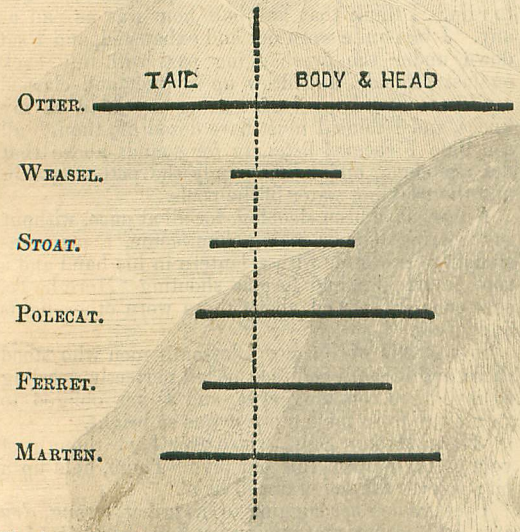
'DO IT WITH THY MIGHT.'

A MEDICAL man was one day returning to his home, when he saw a child in great peril in the street. Another instant, and she would have been crushed under the iron-shod hoofs, which were almost upon her. At the risk of his own life he rushed forward, and seizing the little one bore her safely to the pavement.

He looked into the child's face, pushing aside her flapping sun-bonnet, and what were his feelings when he saw that it was his own daughter whom he had rescued! So he who hastes to save the perishing, often finds reward he little expected. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.'

THE OTTER.

THE Otter belongs to a class of animals which we may call the Weasel tribe. Their bodies are long and lithe, and their legs short. This family includes the weasel (its smallest member), the stoat, the ferret, the polecat, the marten, and the otter (its largest member). You may then think of the Otter as a water-ferret, or water-weasel. By this little diagram you will see how long his body and tail are, compared with the rest of his family:—



The length of the weasel is seven or eight inches, and his tail two; the Otter is about 25 inches in length, and his tail no less than 16 inches. God gave him a long, flat, and broad tail for a rudder, broad feet for oars, and wonderfully sharp teeth to hold fast his slippery food. He can swim most elegantly, and he is a beautiful diver. Let a fish glide underneath him, and he is after it in a moment; and as the fish darts here and there to escape, the Otter follows each rapid movement with unerring precision. When the fish is caught, the Otter carries it to the bank and makes a meal. But the Otter is like naughty Jack who leaves a saucy plate—he spoils much more fish than he eats. The trout and other fish are so much alarmed at the appearance of an Otter, that they will sometimes fling themselves on the bank to get out of his way.

It is possible to train Otters to catch fish for their masters, as the greyhound and retriever are trained. Izaac Walton tells us of one tamed and made useful by a gentleman named Seagrave. Otters were kept in Swedish mansions for the purpose of catching fish. When the cook gave a signal the Otter started off to catch and bring home the fish for dinner.

Bishop Heber noticed the same sort of thing in India. The Hindoos make straw collars for their Otters, and keep them tethered by a string to a bamboo stake. They are nearly as tame as dogs, and they will drive fish into their masters' net as a sheep dog will huddle the flock into the yard or pen.

But while the heathen Hindoo, with less knowledge than we have, as we fancy, makes the Otter useful and happy, we, on our part, do nothing with him but hunt him to death. Otter-hunting used to be very popular, but it is now nearly unknown, probably because Otters have been almost destroyed. The return from a successful otter-hunt is thus described:—The gentlemen ride first. Next come several men dressed gaily, in scarlet coats and white trousers, carrying long spears, at the top of which the dead Otters are stuck. Next comes the huntsman with his pack of dogs. Then a cart, containing spears, nets, and other tackle. And lastly, an old ballad-singer, chanting the praises of victorious dogs and men!

The Otter's flesh is strong and fishy in taste, but it is sometimes eaten. There are certain monks in Roman Catholic countries who are not allowed by the rules of their order to eat flesh. These men consider the Otter is a sort of fish, and they eat him.

God teaches the Otter where to choose his home. Trees often grow on river banks; and among the tree-roots are many convenient ledges and holes. Here, or in some such retreat, the Otter lives. Sometimes the river Otter will visit the sea. And there is also an Otter called the Sea Otter, an animal different in some respects from the common Otter. This creature is found on the coast of Antrim in Ireland. There is also a Scottish breed, spotted with white, and called 'the King of the Otters.' They say it bears a charmed life, and never dies without some one dying at the same moment. Several very tame Otters have been known in Scotland. One would eat gooseberries, and fondle his master's feet like a kitten. He would let you lift him by his tail, but was highly indignant if you meddled with his nose.

The colour of the Otter is deep brown, except the throat and breast, which are of the hue of ashes. The Sea Otter is nearly black. G. S. O.

A LESSON FROM THE TIDES.

HOW reluctantly the waves
Seem to leave our happy shore,
Toiling side by side in vain,
Toward the heights attain'd before,
When King Tide, in his pride,
Held his revels on this floor.

If we come again in time,
We shall hear their kindling song,
While they troop in from afar,
Like an army plumed and strong;
Ever true, when they're due,
In their serried ranks along.

Those who imitate the tides
In the grandeur of their way,
Always punctual and true,
Be their business what it may,
Feel as free as the sea,
And as joyous as the spray. D. G.

The Otter.

MARY'S LEAP.

A CONTINUATION OF 'HOW JOHN GOT HIS COUSINS A CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY.'

YOU have heard how John got his cousins a Christmas holiday, and I think it may amuse you to hear a little more about these cousins and the way in which they lived. The eldest was named Susan; then came Emily, Mary, Bessie, and the youngest, Fanny, who was six years old at the time I am writing about. They had one little brother, but he was nearly a baby, and they saw but little of him, as they spent most of their time with their governess and he was still in the nursery. Cousin John was their great hero and favourite, and his holidays the times that they most looked forward to in their rather dull lives; and they were very sorry when the day came for him to go back to school, and they were left alone to the tedious everyday round of walks and lessons, which rarely varied under Miss Forbes' strict discipline. Mary, the third little girl, who was John's especial companion, felt this most. She was a high-spirited child, ready for any amount of fun, and disposed to be as much of a tom-boy as her limited opportunities would allow. It would be impossible to tell all the scrapes into which John managed to lead her, in spite of Miss Forbes' efforts to keep them apart, and the week's holiday I have told you of was such a chance as the two had never enjoyed before. It was no wonder, therefore, that poor Mary was little disposed for schoolroom life when this blissful time was over, and that Miss Forbes' rules and regulations seemed more disagreeable than ever.

That winter was a very severe one. The snow out of which the children had made their snow-man soon melted away, but about a month later, just when every one was beginning to hope that spring was close at hand, down it came again. Day after day the children watched the snow-flakes steadily falling, falling, till they said that Mother Carey's poor little chickens would soon have no feathers left if she went on plucking them in this way; and certainly they must have had a tolerable supply to start with, to make the world as white as they did! The snow on the roads was so deep that a path had to be dug out to enable the carts and carriages to get about at all, and, piled up on either side, it stood so high above the children's heads that when they went out for their daily walk with Miss Forbes they played at being in Switzerland, and pretended that these were the snowy mountains over which they had to climb—at least the three who were 'off duty' (as Mary called it) played, for they all had to take it in turns to walk one on each side of Miss Forbes and have their minds improved as they went along.

Walking in this weather was often attended with very unpleasant results. The ground was terribly slippery, and we all know that children are anything but sure-footed little mortals; but for one of the Miss Meadowes to tumble down was a serious offence, according to Miss Forbes' ideas. 'Such a thing could not occur,' she said, 'without great neglect of a lady-like deportment.' And so a rule was made, that for every tumble a column of spelling must be learned when the offender got home again; and as this was in addition to their ordinary lessons, the little girls soon gave up running about: at least, all but Mary; to her it seemed impossible to walk along quietly, and many were the slips and tumbles she met with, though fortunately most of them happened behind Miss Forbes' back. One morning, however, she had been already three times detected, and feeling that matters were getting serious, and that three columns of spelling were enough for one day, Mary strove hard to govern her wandering feet and to walk sedately between Bessie and Fanny; but, alas! a temptation soon presented itself. Stretching along one side of the road was a lovely slide, made the day before by the village boys. Sliding was the best accomplishment Mary had acquired under John's able tuition. Miss Forbes had turned the corner, there was no one in sight except her two little sisters, and in an instant Mary had dropped their hands and was gliding along over the smooth surface in great glee; but unhappily, just, as she reached the other end, her foot caught in a stump, and over she went into the middle of a bank of snow. She was up again in a moment, not at all hurt, and shaking herself like a Newfoundland dog; but in spite of all her efforts she still looked as if she had been powdered with white sugar, when Miss Forbes, who had found that she was not following, came back to see what had happened. She did not stop to ask any questions, but saying severely, '*Another* column of spelling, Miss Mary!' walked on. To Mary it seemed very hard and cruel indeed. 'Who could help tumbling in such slippery weather?' she said to herself; 'and why should they not run about and play like other children?' As she followed Miss Forbes along the road she made no effort to suppress her angry feelings. 'At all events it should not happen again,' she thought; and then she remembered hearing that sailors go about with bare feet in order to be more sure-footed, and it suddenly occurred to her that she would do the same. 'Even Miss Forbes must be sorry when she gets home and sees what I have done,' thought Mary: 'perhaps I shall be frost-bitten, and then my feet would have to be cut off, and father would be angry and send Miss Forbes away.'

This idea was delightful! Mary slipped behind her sisters, sat down on the hard ground by the roadside, and in an instant had pulled off her boots and gaiters, and even the socks underneath. I think she repented a little as her feet first touched the cold ground, and a pebble on which she trod hurt her at the very first step she took. Never mind, the snow at the side of the path would be softer; and into this she got accordingly, and made her way after the others as best she could. Oh, how her feet and legs ached! But it was too late to repent. Her boots and socks would take much longer to put on than to take off, and she could only feel thankful that she was now close at home. No one observed her plight, for she kept behind, and they turned in at the Lodge gates, and were half way up the drive, when Mary, to her horror, saw her father coming towards them.

'Hullo, girls!' he shouted, as he saw them coming, and the others set off running to meet him, while poor Mary, who would usually have been the first, shuffled along in the snow as quickly as she could, looking so funny that her father noticed it.

'Why Mary, child, what are you at?' he exclaimed.

Miss Forbes turned round, and poor Mary stood convicted, the picture of despair, with her head hanging down, a boot in each hand, and her socks and gaiters hanging over her arms. Miss Forbes began a volley of questions, but Mr. Meadowes stopped her, and having got at the truth he said, '*I* shall punish the child this time, Miss Forbes. Mary, you ought to be ashamed of yourself! Go straight home, and instead of learning that spelling, go to bed for the rest of the day.'

Mary was only too glad to get off so easily, but probably Mr. Meadowes had his own reasons for what he did, and hoped, by keeping her thoroughly warm, to prevent any ill effects from her silly trick. In this, however, he was disappointed. The next morning Mary was very poorly. She had caught a bad cold, and had to stay in bed for some time; and, what was worse, she had to take much nasty medicine.

In those days children were much more dosed than they are now, and two or three times a-day Mary would see nurse advancing with the cup full of horrid-smelling stuff, which always made her bury herself under the clothes in the vain hope of escaping.

Unluckily the other little girls caught cold, too, and one after another was laid up; so that the schoolroom party was scattered for a long time. Last of all Miss Forbes herself fell a victim, and was obliged to take to her room and her bed as the others had done, with a really bad attack of bronchitis. The day before this happened Mr. Meadowes heard that the master of Cousin John's school had died suddenly, and that all the boys had of course to be sent home at once.

'Nothing could have been more unfortunate!' Miss Forbes said. 'Nothing could have been so lucky!' the children thought.

It was now the end of April, and bright warm weather had set in, as it sometimes does in the spring. With no lessons to do, and no one in particular to look after them, the children ran wild to their hearts' content, and got into an amount of mischief which would have driven Miss Forbes out of her mind, had she been aware of it. It is to be feared that old nurse did not interfere as much as she might have done, for she was not fond of the governess; but some of John's pranks were a little beyond even her endurance.

One day he beguiled his cousins into a large outhouse, the upper floor of which had long been a favourite resort of the fowls. At one end of this old stable an immense heap of hay and straw, which had got damaged in some way, was waiting to be carted away; just over it was a great hole in the floor above, and at the other end of this floor was a smaller hole, just big enough for a man to get through, and which communicated by a ladder with the ground. Such a field for a good game of play could not be neglected. Off set John, with the five little girls after him, up the ladder, along the floor above, *flump* through the hole on to the hay beneath, then up the ladder again! On they went running, leaping, tumbling, screaming at the top of their voices, while the state of their hair and clothes is easier imagined than described. The great point was to scramble off the hay before the next one came down on the top of you—which was not at all easy; but none of the children were in the humour to mind a few bumps.

Mr. Meadowes passed by, and stopped for a few minutes to watch them, laughing at the scene. The gardener and groom came to look, too, well pleased to see their young ladies having a real good game for once. What would poor Miss Forbes, resting peacefully in her bed, have said, could she too have beheld what was going on! But such a game could not last very long. One by one the little girls 'caved in,' and had to stand aside, panting and exhausted, to watch the others, till at last only John was left, upbraiding his cousins with their laziness. But something more than laziness was the matter. No sooner had they stood still for a minute or two, than one after another began fidgeting about, rubbing and scratching themselves, while exclamations of 'Oh dear! there's something tickling me!' 'What *can* it be creeping on my back?' 'Fanny, just look if there's anything on my face!' 'Oh dear! oh dear! I'm itching all over!' were heard on every side.

Things got worse instead of better, and at last the children set off running towards the house, and never stopped till they were in the nursery. There nurse lifted up her hands, in dismay at their appearance, as well she might. But her horror increased when she heard their explanations and complaints. Hastily calling some of the maids to her assistance, they were all undressed and put into baths; even their heads had to be well washed, for they were covered with *fleas!* For once too, nurse got no comfort from her master when she complained to him, for he could not well punish the children after laughing at them; and it had never occurred to him, any more than to them, that an outhouse where fowls were kept was sure to be swarming with insects.

Perhaps it was his escape from punishment on this occasion which emboldened John to worse doings the next day. He had been reading a book about earthquakes, and was much impressed by the description it gave of their terrible consequences. Accordingly, when his cousins were assembled around him the next morning in the garden, awaiting their orders from their lord and master, John began:—

'Girls, I've thought of an awfully jolly new game. I vote we play at earthquakes.'

'How are we to?' said Mary, while little Fanny meekly inquired, 'What is an earth-shake?'

'Not shake—quake,' answered John; 'though it does shake like anything, and all the houses come tumbling down, and all sorts of larks.'

'We can't make our house tumble down though,' said Bessie. 'Father would be so angry.'

'Of course not,' said John, with grandeur. 'What muffs you girls are! There are lots of other things besides that. Sometimes burning stuff comes out of mountains and covers up whole cities, just in a minute, and all the people have to be dug out hundreds of years after; and there they are, reading or drinking, or whatever they were doing when it happened.'

'How dreadfully tired they must be of doing the same thing all that time!' said little Fanny, who was matter-of-fact.

'Oh, you're such a baby!' exclaimed John, perhaps feeling that his explanation had not been quite clear. 'Come along, and I'll show you what we'll do.'

(*Concluded in our next.*)

"Another column of spelling, Miss Mary."

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Chatterbox.

Shock carrying the Umbrellas.

A WISE DOG.

THERE is a curly retriever at Arundel bearing the name of 'Shock,' which sets an example of good manners and intelligence to the animals which are not dumb. He carries the cat of the stables tenderly in his mouth, and would carry the kitten, but at present the kitten prefers its own means of locomotion. When Sanger's elephant got into trouble in the river Arun, this wise Shock was sent to turn him out, and his perseverance succeeded. He often will insist on carrying a bundle of umbrellas to the station, and safely he delivers them to their owners, and then with many wags of his brown tail he demands a halfpenny for his trouble. This halfpenny he carries to the nearest shop, lays it on the counter, and receives his biscuit in return. Need we say this dog has a kind, sensible master? A. B.

HALT!

(*Continued from page* 91.)

I DID not seem to have any voice in the matter myself; it was enough for me to watch the great roaring fire of logs, sparkling and blazing, and hissing and shining, on the oak settles, and bright pots and pans, and china—nothing dark or damp *there!* And then I was in Mrs. Blossom's care, drinking something hot and strong, that seemed to set my blood flowing again. And by-and-by I was sitting up in the big arm-chair, right in the chimney-corner, with my horrid, clinging wet things taken off, and some of the farmer's in their place, miles too big; but, oh, so dry and warm! and a blanket on the top of them, and a great steaming basin of arrowroot in front of me. O yes! you may laugh and talk of slops and messes; but wait till you've been down in a chalk-pit for several hours in January, and are sick and sore all over, and have not had anything to eat for twelve hours, and *then* turn up your nose at a basin of arrowroot made by Mrs. Blossom!

She was bustling about getting a bed ready for me, and filling the warming-pan with red embers, when the farmer came in again.

'Well, Master Tom, and how do you feel yourself now? I've sent off Joe to the Hermitage to say as how they needn't worrit themselves about you, as you're all right here, and won't be back till some time to-morrow. And he's going to take the little maid home (queer little piece she be, too, and no mistake!) and say as how her mother mustn't scold her, seeing as she've been a good girl, and as how you'll look in to-morrow and tell them the rights of the story. She didn't a bit like going home, and piped her eye, and said as how she'd get the stick; but I gave her a bit of supper and packed her off, and Joe, he'll see as it's all square.'

'How did she find me?' I asked.

'Well, you know as she followed you down to the meet, and you told her to go along home. But she didn't go—not *she!* but come on after you was out of sight. She couldn't keep up anything like, of course, but as luck would have it the fox come right back. They killed him right over against my duck-pond here. So Nan, she happened to be just by the chalk-pits when they came back, and she saw you run out just above them to give a call, and she hid away for she was afraid you'd give her a talking to for not going home, if you caught sight on her; and then she saw nothing of you after that. After it was all over, Master Frank came and asked her if she'd seen you, and then some fellow said as you'd gone home and Master Frank went off. But Nan, she didn't feel quite satisfied, and she went back to the pit to have a look.'

'What a long way she must have gone!'

'Way! not so far. It's not more than half a mile or so.'

'Not more? We seemed to go miles.'

'Yes, sure, and so you did. But you don't notice when you're fox-hunting how you go up and down and round and round. Well, she looked about, and didn't see you nowhere, and she thought as you must have gone home, when she found your handkerchief on a gorse-bush where you'd gone through, close to the mouth of the pit, and she crept through, and was a looking through when you saw her; leastways so she says.'

'What would have become of me if she had not come back?'

'Ah, Master Tom, there's no saying! I've seen that pit after a thaw as full of water as it could be. It ought not to be left open like that, but a rail put round to keep folks out of it. Why, there was two pigs drowned there last fall, to my certain knowledge. It was a terrible near thing for you, young master, and you'll not forget it in a hurry, I reckon. And it do seem to me,' went on the good farmer slowly,—'It do seem to me, Master Tom, the longer I lives, the plainer I sees what a mercy it be that we poor creatures have some one to look after us. I'm not a preacher; but when I looks round and sees accidents here—and sickness there—and foot-and-mouth disease constant—and blight one year and fly another—and drought now and floods then—and wages high—and yet that one gets along and pays one's way, I says to myself, Master Tom, dear me! says I.'

Then came Mrs. Blossom to say that the bed was quite ready, and I was soon tucked up warm and snug between heaps of blankets and sheets smelling of lavender and rose-leaves, and all as hot as a warming-pan could make it. Mrs. Blossom tucked me up with the greatest care, and before she drew the curtains and left me to the delicious sleep that was creeping all over me, and weighing down my heavy eyelids, she bent over the bed and gave me a loud kiss.

Don't tell any one—for I never even told Bertie—but she was such a kind old soul, and her eyes were full of tears as she said, 'Thank God, my dear, thank God as you're safe!' And I just put my arms round her fat neck, rumpling her collar and pushing her cap all on one side, and gave her a kiss in return

on one of her comfortable cheeks. And then I turned round and was asleep in a moment, saying to myself, 'He hath put a new song in my mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our God.'

CHAPTER XVI.

I SLEPT very late next morning; it was near twelve when I woke up, and sat up wondering how I came there. Mrs. Blossom had been in several times to see me that morning, and once or twice in the night too, but I was sleeping too peacefully to make any one anxious. Frank and Bertie had come over quite early to see after me, and to hear the rights of the story, which had reached them in a very distorted form, but Mrs. Blossom would not let them come near me lest they should wake me.

'Let the lad have his sleep out, and a good meal to put inside him, and he won't be none the worse. Young things can stand a deal as would be the death of older folk.'

So Frank and Bertie went off with the farmer somewhere, and I slept on till twelve. I felt rather queer when I first got up, and shaky, but when I came down into the kitchen the mere smell of the hissing slice of bacon that Mrs. Blossom was broiling over the fire seemed to do me good; and I sat down nothing loth to the small round table in front of the hearth. It was covered with a coarse, snow-white cloth, on which were displayed a great, big country loaf, a roll of freshly-churned butter, a little brown earthenware teapot, a little white jug of thick cream, and two cream-coloured new-laid eggs; and I found Mrs. Blossom's advice excellent, and that the long sleep and good breakfast together made a thorough cure of me.

When Frank and Bertie came in I was quite ready to go off with them, and we went away after thanking the good farmer and his wife for their kindness to me, but they would hardly let us speak of it.

'There, lad, don't say any more about it. Me and missus is only too pleased for to have you, and you can't come too often nor stay too long. There, ye'll vex us if ye say another word!'

We went to have one look at the chalk-pit before we went back to the Hermitage, and I was quite surprised to find how much nearer it was to Oatlands Farm than I thought. I just took one look down and saw that the whole bottom was covered with water, but I did not care to look again, for it brought back the horror of it all, even though it had the bright midday sun on it.

Then we went home to the Hermitage, and on the way we turned into Roberts's cottage, and had a talk with Mrs. Roberts. Nan had actually gone to school. She had not had the stick when she got home the night before, in consequence of Farmer Blossom's message.

Then I told her what had happened, and how Nan had been the means of saving my life, and she listened with much surprise, saying, 'Well—I never! Did she really now?' at intervals, and when I had finished,—

'Well, I'm glad as my maid was the one to find you, but don't you go for to put it into the child's head as she've done something fine. She was a naughty little maid all the same, and ought to have been at school learning her book. She thinks a terrible deal of you, Master Tom, and maybe she'd mind if you spoke a word to her, and told her to stick to her book.'

'All right!' I said, feeling it was a new position for me to be in. 'I'll give her a good preach; but, all the same, it was lucky for me that she did play truant.'

'And perhaps when you're talking to her, Master Tom, you'd just mention as she oughtn't to mess and tear her clothes. Why, she've nothing decent to her back, though I gets her twice what I does Liza!'

'All right, Mrs. Roberts; I'll give her a regular lecture, see if I don't; and my mother shall send her a new bonnet and gown, and things to go to school in.'

Then we went to the Hermitage, where I had to tell the same story to Mrs. Cheviot, and Polly, and Giles, and the stable-boy. The first thing I saw when I got into the house was the fox's brush on the dining-room table, and it was only then that I found out that Frank had really been in at the death. The fox had come round just as the old man had said, and Frank, after a good rest, had joined them again just as the fox was getting on his last legs, and had seen the end of him by the duck-pond at Oatlands Farm.

Mr. Colleton, the master of the hounds, had spoken to us once or twice during the day, and seeing Frank at the death he gave him the brush, as there were no ladies present.

'I wanted to get the head for you, Tom, but Mostyn had promised it to a gentleman to make a tobacco-pouch of, but he says you shall have the next; and I'm sure you deserve the brush, for you followed much harder than I did; and you shall have it, too!'

'That I won't!' I answered; 'so Polly can have it for her Sunday bonnet.'

'She won't have it after all,' Frank said, 'though I tell her she's sure to get married if she wears it. And what do you think she said?'

'What?'

'"I'm in no 'urry, Master Frank; and there's more nor one as is looking after me without any poor beast's tail." So I offered the beast's tail to Mrs. Cheviot for her new hat, making believe that she was going to a have swell new one, don't you know, with an ostrich feather; and I said, "It's quite the cheese this year, Mrs. Cheviot, and all the young ladies wear nothing else but foxes' brushes;" and what do you think she said?'

'I expect she said, "Get along with your imperence, Master Frank!"'

'So she did. Them's her very words, and she chevied me out of the kitchen with a mop. So if you won't have the beast's tail, I'll take it home to Bell.'

There had been a letter from the Colonel that morning to Frank, saying that he should not be back till the next day, as he could not get his business settled as quickly as he had hoped. He said that all the Hallidays were well, and pretty cheerful, and 'it teaches one a lesson,' he added, 'to see how well they all bear the trouble, down to little Bell, who is the sunshine of the house. God bless her!'

"Mrs. Blossom tucked me up with the greatest care."

I thought to myself as Frank read the letter, that he had behaved as well as any of them, for he was as bright and jolly as ever, only I could see that it was never quite out of his thoughts, and he avoided any talk of the future. He did not even know, till the Colonel came back, whether he was to go back to school, though the holidays were very nearly over. Bertie and I were to go back to Highmore at the end of the week, and I hoped very much that the Colonel's business would not detain him longer, so that we should not have to go back without seeing him again. However, he promised to be back on Thursday, and we were not to go till Saturday morning.

(To be continued.)

VENETIAN WATER-CARRIER.

IN London we are supplied with water, as every one knows, through street mains and branch pipes. The Parisians have canals, and fountains in the public places; the Romans have aqueducts. But in Venice, a populous city girt by a breadth of sea-water and salt-marsh five miles wide at the narrowest, and which, therefore, no brook or rivulet has ever touched, how are its inhabitants to obtain their daily supply of the pure element?

Odd as it may seem, water travels by water: barges, laden to the brim, bring it chiefly from the mouth of the Brenta, some six miles distant, to the terraces and quay-sides of Venice; it is then baled out into troughs, through which it flows into wells, of which there are many in different parts of the city; and of such value is fresh water, that the rainfalls also are conducted to these wells, where the whole is left to settle and purify itself till wanted for use.

Now in Venice, for five months in the year, it is as hot as in a broiling London August: the people, therefore, must needs drink a great deal of water, and it might be thought that these operations of shipping, baling, and mixing with rain-fall, and this often during the heat of the day, would render it as a beverage queer and unpalatable. But such is not the case.

We said that the water remained settling in the cool wells till wanted for use. Twice a-day, at twelve and at two, groups of water-carriers, gay in many-coloured costumes, neckerchiefs, jaunty hats, silk turbans, and striped aprons, gather round the well's mouth. They sit, stand, or lounge, in full gossip; for in Venice every man, woman, and child is a born chatterbox. Presently the hour peals forth from a neighbouring campanile; some bulky official of the district, with a ponderous bunch of keys, makes his way to the well and unlocks the grating over its mouth. Rapidly the girls, with hook and cord, dip each their pair of bright copper buckets, or *secchios*, and hanging them on the decorated bow, hurry off thus laden to the neighbouring palaces, hotels, and mansions, every bucketfull so carried fetching its due price. Thus, for an hour or more, the busy distribution goes on, until the official with the keys again appears, fastens down the grating, and the vexed waters are again left for a few hours to repose and purify in stillness. F. B.

MARY'S LEAP.

(*Concluded from page 95.*)

THE children all followed him to the bottom of the garden, where in one corner was an old shed, surrounded by a low tumble-down wall. It had, in fact, been at one time used as a pigsty, but not being wanted, it had fallen out of repair, and was in a very shaky condition.

'Now look here,' cried John, preparing to climb up a tree, against which one side of the wall was built; 'do you see how the wall shakes when I rock the tree about?' It did indeed. 'Now I and Mary will climb up here, and shake about, and make a tremendous row for thunder, and fling down all sorts of things on your heads, because there is always a great storm and hail, and that sort of thing, you know; and then, when you see the wall shaking and the things coming down, you must be in a great fright, and pretend to carry off the furniture out of your houses, and your children and so on, and rush about screaming. And oh, I say, what fun!' suddenly exclaimed the boy interrupting himself; 'I do believe the wall will come down—just look!'

In fact, as he spoke several of the rough stones of which the wall was made fell down with a crash, loosened by the shaking he gave them; and at the same instant a squeak and a grunt were heard, and out from the shed waddled a fat pig, which the children had disturbed in the middle of a comfortable nap.

'Here's a lark!' shouted John. 'We can do it beautifully now! We'll bury piggy in his own house, and then dig him out again. Come on!'

'Nonsense, John!' said Susan; 'you mustn't do anything of the sort. That must be the prize pig father was talking about; but I can't think how he got in here!'

'Why Joe must have put him here, to keep him away from the others; and he's so fat that he thought he couldn't run away, even out of this ramshackle place. Now then, old grunter!' and over the wall leaped John, and quickly succeeded in driving the pig back into the shed: the door of which he fastened as securely as he could. 'Just look how rickety it is!' he went on: if I took away these two sticks, pointing to some props at the sides, it would come down with a run in no time.' And, unable to resist the temptation, John began tugging away at the supports, which yielded to his efforts.

'Oh, don't! don't, John!' screamed his cousins. 'Father will be so angry!'

'Nonsense!' answered John. 'I'm not going to hurt the old pig, and I don't believe uncle knows there is such a place as this in the garden;' and as he spoke the last prop gave way, and a vigorous push brought down a great bit of the roof, with plenty of dust and noise. 'Now then, Mary, fire away!' shouted the excited boy; 'it's coming!' The other little girls fled screaming, but Mary up in the tree, entering into the spirit of the thing, bent and swayed about, making the nearest stones on the wall totter and tumble by her efforts. They were only too successful. A few more shakes and pushes given with all John's strength and one side of the shed gave way, falling with part of the roof on to the top of poor piggy, whose indignant squeak was only equalled by a scream of mingled pain and astonishment from the boy himself, who received at the same instant a sharp cut across the shoulders, and felt his arm grasped by his uncle.

'You young rascal! what are you doing?' shouted the latter indignantly; and before John had recovered breath to answer he went on—'Why, you don't mean to say that the prize pig is in there? He'll be ruined to a certainty! Here, Joe! Tom! How dare you do such a thing, sir?' and blow after blow descended on poor John, while the men came running up, attracted by the little girls' cries and their master's voice. As for Mary she crouched down in the tree, not daring to move, and dreadfully afraid that her turn was coming next; but, luckily for her, her father's attention was so taken up with John and the pig that he did not notice her. The latter was soon released, and certainly escaped far more easily than his tormentor, who looked anything but a 'prize boy' when Mr. Meadowes marched him back to the house, and locked him up in a room by himself for the rest of the day.

Nurse used to say, that 'if Master John had been a *nail*, he couldn't have took to blows more *nat'ral!*' But nurse forgot that when a nail is once forced into its place it usually remains there, whereas John was for ever coming out again, and requiring to be beaten in afresh. Never was there a boy with such elastic spirits. For a little time after the unlucky earthquake game he certainly did keep out of mischief, or at all events managed to avoid his being found out; but

this may have been partly owing to some one sending him *The Swiss Family Robinson*, which occupied all his thoughts for a time. Unfortunately, however, it also inspired him with new ideas, one of which was that he and all his cousins should take up their abode in the great trees which skirted one side of the park. Beyond these trees was a high wall, separating it from the high-road, and in two or three places John, who was an active boy, could swing himself from the trees on to the wall itself, greatly to the admiration of his cousins, who thought it the most wonderful feat in the world. Unluckily, however, Mr. Meadowes saw the performance one day, and strictly forbade it, as the height of the wall, which was quite narrow at the top, made it very unsafe. Up the trees themselves, however, John still scrambled, his uncle rightly thinking that you might as well forbid a squirrel to climb trees when he had the chance as a boy. Lately he had taught more than one of his cousins to follow his example, and Mary was most successful in the art, and, as usual, entered the most readily into John's plans. They were explaining these plans to the rest in the garden one morning soon after breakfast, when one of the servants told them that Miss Forbes had come down to the schoolroom, and begged that the young ladies would come in to their lessons at once. This was indeed a terrible blow; but John had guessed what was coming, and directly the servant began speaking he seized Mary by the hand and rushed off, dragging her after him. It was very naughty, and Mary's conscience told her that she ought to go back, for she could guess easily enough what the servant had come for; but her cousin persuaded her that it did not matter, as she really had not heard the message, and he dwelt so much upon the delights of living in a tree that, unhappily, Mary allowed herself to be coaxed into going with him.

He had already chosen what he thought a favourable tree, and they began their ascent at once, John being anxious to get out of reach as soon as possible.

The excitement of climbing soon made Mary forget her scruples. On they went, up and up, higher than she had ever gone before; but with John to lead the way, and help her as kindly as he was doing that morning, Mary was not the least afraid. It was true her clothing was not quite suited for the occasion, especially her sun-bonnet, which was so large that it often prevented her seeing which way she was going; so she took it off and hung it on a bough, which, she remarked, would do for the hat-stand in their hall. Her frock suffered greatly, but she consoled herself with the thought that a few rents more or less did not much matter on a desert island, where there was no one to see her. At last they came to a delightful nook about half way up the tree, where they could sit side by side on one bough, with another to put their feet on, and a lovely prospect of the country around to be seen through the fresh young leaves. Mary was very glad to rest, though at first it made her quite giddy to look down; but she was very proud of her exploit, and pleased with John's praises; and they were talking and laughing merrily enough, when suddenly John stopped, saying, 'Hush!' and peeping over his shoulder she saw her father coming across the park. 'Sit still,' whispered John: 'perhaps he won't notice us!' Possibly he might not have done so, if he had not known where to look, but Miss Forbes had been to him in great anger at Mary's absence. One of the gardeners had seen them running towards the trees, and now Mary's bonnet hanging on a bough showed him at once where they were. Great was the children's dismay when he stopped at the foot of the very tree in which they were hidden, and called out sternly, 'Children, come down directly!' John saw at once that escape was impossible, and knew that the quicker he obeyed the less severe his punishment was likely to be; so he began his descent at once. He did not hurry himself, of course, as he rather expected a warm welcome from his uncle, so he had only gone a little way when a shout from his uncle made him look up, and to his horror he saw that Mary was not following, nor could he see where she was. Hastily slipping to the ground, he joined Mr. Meadowes, who was standing some paces off, gazing up into the tree, and calling out to Mary to come back. John looked up, and saw at once that his cousin could not obey. She had got on to one of the long boughs which stretched towards the wall, and lying flat on it, as she had seen John do, she was slowly pulling herself along, while the supple wood bent and swayed under her weight.

'Leave her, uncle!' almost whispered John; 'she must go on till she gets to the wall now: she can do it well enough if you don't frighten her. I often have.'

In truth, to turn would have been impossible; and seeing this, the two stood watching breathlessly, till Mary, within two feet of the wall, suddenly seized the branch in both hands, and swung herself round towards it. Mr. Meadowes shut his eyes; when he opened them again the little figure was standing erect, but, alas! not out of danger.

'Stay where you are, Mary,' shouted her father, 'while I send for a ladder;' but the child was too frightened to understand. At the sound of his voice she started off at once, running along the wall. Mr. Meadowes followed, calling to her to stop. Unhappily she was only too frightened as it was; escape was her one idea, and when a sudden rise in the wall did indeed stop her, she turned round and leapt off into the road below.

How Mr. Meadowes got round to the place he never knew, but when he did he found Mary quite insensible, lying on a heap of dust and leaves which had happily been swept together there. If it had not been for that dust-heap, Mary's leap would probably have cost her her life. As it was, she escaped with a sprained ankle and a cut on her head from a bit of broken bottle. For a long time she was very ill in bed, and so delirious that she knew no one. When she came to herself she found a very kind, gentle lady, was taking care of her, whom she had never seen before. She wondered who it could be, but the lady would not let her talk, and it was not till the first time Bessie was allowed to pay her a visit that Mary heard, to her great delight, that this was their new governess, and that Miss Forbes had gone away about a week after she was taken ill. 'And do you know, Mary,' went on Bessie, 'father forgave Cousin John, and he takes us out for walks himself sometimes now, and he says that when you are well enough we are all going to the sea-side. Do make haste!' And happy Mary did make haste.

C. H.

Mary's Leap.

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Chatterbox.

"What may I have the pleasure of showing you this morning, sir?

HALT!

(*Continued from page* 100.)

CHAPTER XVII.

THE next morning Giles sent in to say that he had to drive to Meddington about the harness, and he asked if we would like to go in with him; and we sent out word that we had some shopping to do and would go.

Polly looked surprised at the message, and was very curious to find out what shopping we had to do; and Giles also tried to find out, by suggesting good shops for things he thought we were likely to want.

'Stagg's is the place for knives, sir. I got a good one there two years come Michaelmas, and I've never had a better; though they do say as Margary's are not to be equalled for strength. And for little things, such as wire or nails, or such-like, Stagg's is always good.'

'Ah,' said Frank, 'so I have heard.'

'Or if it was lines as you wanted, or anything in the fishing-tackle way as you wanted, you can't do better than Hodge's, in the Butter Market.'

'Yes,' I replied, 'it's not a bad shop.'

His curiosity got worked up to the highest degree by the time we reached Meddington; but when Frank told him to pull up at Moorsted and Wells', in Broad Street, the big linen-drapers, he opened his eyes and mouth in amazement.

'Why, you don't mean the drapers?'

'Yes, that's the one.'

Then he thought it was a joke, and I saw his ears prick up and his cheeks wrinkle into a broad grin at the young gents trying to get a rise out of him.—'Not *he!* he were too old a bird to be took in by their chaff.'

But when he pulled up Harkaway with a flourish before Moorsted and Wells', and we all three got out and went into the shop, he could scarcely believe his eyes, and stopped a minute staring after us before he took Harkaway off to the 'George.'

The fact of the matter was, that when we had been talking over the present Nan was to have from mother, Frank had suggested that we should go and buy her a rig-out ourselves.

'I say, why not?' he said; 'it would be no end of a lark, don't you know. Women make such a tremendous to-do over shopping; but it's easy enough! I've been with the *mater* and Bell sometimes (not when I can help it, though!), and to see how they have had down thing after thing, till the counter is heaped up to the ceiling, pretty near, and one knows the man is wishing them at Jericho; and then, after all the fuss, they take the very first thing they looked at!'

'But, then,' said Bertie anxiously, 'there's a great deal in feeling the stuff with your first finger and thumb. Mother always does that.'

'Oh, yes,' I went on; 'and crumpling it up, and talking about "*dress*."'

'Oh, I know fast enough,' said Frank; 'and then it's carried down to the door, to have a good light on it, don't you know, and then they don't have it after all. Well, we can do all that, if it's necessary, and we can't be far out.'

'All right,' I said; 'but don't let us say a word to Mrs. Cheviot or any one. We don't want them bothering with advice and that. We'll show them what stuff we've got when we come home.'

'What kind of stuff is it to be?' asked Bertie, who was rather distrustful of our powers.

'Something strong,' I said, remembering Nan's torn frocks.

'And dark,' Frank added, remembering the dirt.

'But what *sort* of stuff?' persisted Bertie; 'for we shall have to ask for it in the shop.'

'Oh, let's see—what's the name of that stuff? Bombazine—that's the sort of thing.'

'Or barège,' I said; 'one hears of barège.'

'Or muslin-de-laine,' put in Bertie.

'Oh, no!' chimed in Frank and I, 'nothing muslin. Muslin's always thin stuff. It won't do for Nan.'

I must confess that when we found ourselves walking up Moorsted and Wells' shop, and a very smiling, bland man coming to meet us, with, 'What may I have the pleasure of showing you this morning, sir?'—my courage began to fail me, and I sneaked behind Frank, and elbowed him forward.

'We want some stuff for a gown.'

'Certainly, sir. May I trouble you to step this way? Will you take a seat? Miss Jones, will you attend to these gentlemen?'

A very elegant young lady, with a pencil stuck into the front of her dress, came to serve us, and inquired, 'What material do you wish, sir?'

'Bombazine,' said Frank, decidedly.

'That will be in the mourning department, sir.'

'Oh, we don't want mourning,' said Frank; 'blue, or something like that, don't you know.'

I saw a smile twitching the corners of the girl's mouth, and I rushed to the rescue.

'Not bombazine—its barège.'

'Yes, I think we have a blue barège in stock.'

I glanced in triumph at Frank, as having made a lucky shot; but when the stuff was displayed it was much too thin. Frank, however, was not daunted.

'Haven't you got any better qualities?' he said, feeling the stuff carefully between his fingers and shaking his head gravely; 'something rather stouter. It seems to me,' he went on, appealing to me, 'that there's a good deal of—what d'you call it?—*frock* about this stuff—a great deal of frock.'

I gave him a nudge. 'Duffer!' I whispered, 'that's the wrong word—it's *dress*.'

He relapsed into suppressed giggling at this, and shook so that I was obliged to administer a kick. Miss Jones was also simpering in an irritating way, and one or two of the other young women, who happened to be unemployed, came near to hear what was going on, under pretence of rolling up ribbons and putting drawers to rights.

'Look here,' I said, coming nobly to the fore, 'this isn't the sort of stuff. We want something much thicker.' And Bertie pointed to a heap of rolls of different colours, which the woman informed us were tweeds and linseys. This was the very thing, and we

settled on a violet, which seemed to combine all we wanted of strength and usefulness, and yet was pretty-looking.

'How much do you require, sir?'

'Oh, I don't know; what's the general quantity?'

'Twelve yards, sir, is the dress length.'

'Oh, come!' I whispered to Frank; 'that's bosh! She's trying to come over us because she thinks we don't know. Twelve times three are thirty-six. Thirty-six feet of stuff to make a frock. *That's* very likely!'

'Let me see,' said Frank. 'How tall is Nan?'

'She can't be more than four feet, I should say. Well! allow a bit off her head and a bit off her feet, for she won't want a frock from the top of her head to the ground, you know, that will leave three feet—a yard in front and a yard behind. That's plenty.'

'But there's the gathers,' put in Bertie. 'Girls' frocks always have gathers. Don't you know how they always tear out if you put your foot on them. It's that sort of crinkley round the waist.'

'I don't see the good of them,' said Frank; 'it's all a pack of nonsense. Do you think Nan need have gathers, Tom?'

'Well, I suppose she must, if other girls do. And there's the polka jacket.'

'Oh!' said Frank, 'if you're going in for gathers and polka jackets there'll be no end to the stuff.'

'How about trimmings?' said Bertie.

'Don't you know?' said Frank; 'you see gowns with a sort of moulding along the edge—or fringe at the bottom of the petticoats.'

We were getting into deeper and deeper confusion, but our pride would not allow us to consult Miss Jones, who retreated to her friends at the ribbon counter, and tittered audibly at our serious consultation. I don't know what would have happened if Mrs. Blossom had not appeared on the scene, rather hot and out of breath with her jolting drive in the light cart, but quite willing and able to take our business in hand, and manage us and the whole shop together. She took us at once under her motherly wing, and treated Miss Jones with wholesome severity, speaking to her as 'my good girl,' and of her as 'that young person,' with comments on her appearance which Miss Jones must have overheard.

Under her auspices we invested in some purple linsey, just half the price of the one we had chosen and quite as good, as far as we could see; and though six yards seem a good deal when you think of Nan's size, still I suppose gathers are quite necessary.

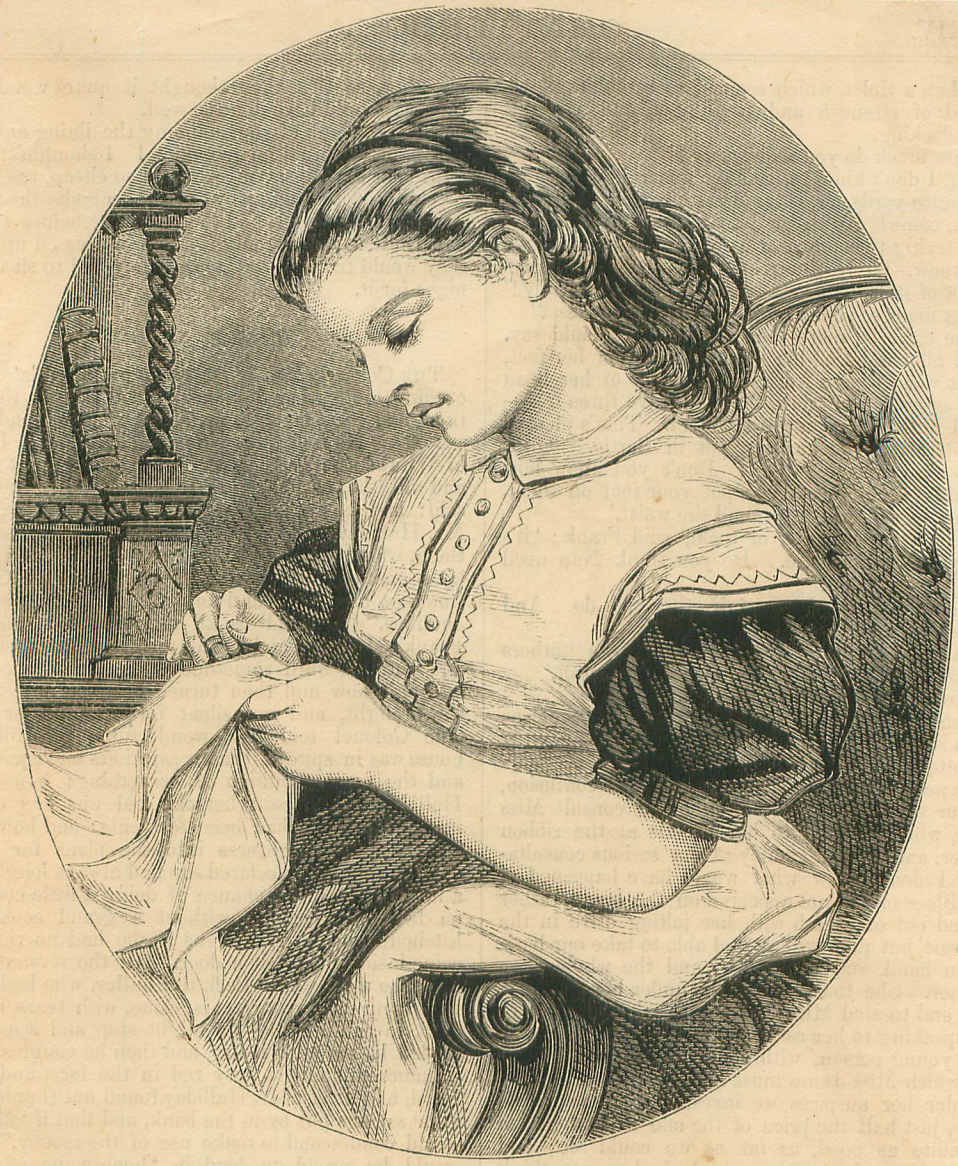
Then she got linings and some black braid for trimming, which seemed to us rather dull; and then, as we had some more money to spend (for we were flush of money just then after the Christmas boxes), we got a jolly little scarlet cloak, and a straw hat with a purple ribbon to trim it. Mrs. Blossom did not quite approve of the scarlet cloak, and strongly recommended a grey or black one instead; but we all voted for putting Nan into 'pink' after her hunting exploits, so she gave in. We drove home very well satisfied with our shopping, and Giles was again much puzzled by the large parcel and band-box from Moorsted and Wells'. We displayed our purchases to Mrs. Cheviot and Polly with great pride, and did not tell them anything about Mrs. Blossom's help in choosing, so that they thought it quite wonderful that we should have done so well.

'And to think of your minding the lining and all, and a bit of braid for trimming! I shouldn't mind a dress of that linsey myself, and so cheap, too!'

And they finished up by offering to make the frock for Nan themselves, and to get it done before Bertie and I left, so that we might see Nan dressed up; and they would trim the hat, too, if they had to sit up all night for it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE Colonel came home as he promised late that evening, and seemed in very good spirits, though there had been much to make his visit to London a sad one. He told us how the Hallidays' large house in Westbourne Terrace was to be given up at once, and all the carriages, and horses, and furniture, sold; and how all the servants were to leave, and Mr. Halliday had taken a house at Hampstead for them, where they would live very plainly, and only keep one servant; and Mr. Halliday and Oliver would go backwards and forwards to business by the omnibus. He told us all this with his hand on Frank's shoulder, and Frank took it all quite quietly, and put in a word sometimes or asked a question, and only now and then turned his face away from the firelight, and was silent for a minute or two. The Colonel told how wonderfully cheerful the house was in spite of the preparations for departure, and the upset condition of everything; how Mrs. Halliday had roused herself, and was less of an invalid than she had been for years; and how Bell entered with brightness into the plans for their changed life, and declared she had always longed for a little house, and a chance of doing a little cooking on her own account, without a grand cook and kitchen-maid to treat her as if she had no right to come inside the kitchen door. All the servants behaved so well. Old Peck the butler, who had lived with them for twenty years, came, with tears in his eyes, to ask whether he might stop and see them settled in the new house, and then he coughed and stammered, and got very red in the face, and confused, and at last Mr. Halliday found out that he had some savings put by in the bank, and that if 'Master would condescend to make use of the money,' Peck would be proud to lend it, 'hoping no offence.' Mrs. Halliday's maid altogether declined to leave. 'She didn't want no wages, but it would just kill her to leave her mistress and Miss Bell. She could make herself useful; she had an uncommon light hand with cakes, and no one could make the mistress's arrow-root to her liking except her.' 'However,' said the Colonel, 'the last idea is that Peck and Tompkins shall make a match of it, and take a house at the sea-side and let lodgings, and the best rooms are always to be ready for master and mistress and Miss Bell, and any of the family; which, I hope,' added the Colonel with a laugh, 'will give satisfaction to the other lodgers. It has been a great consolation to them in their trouble the way in which friends have gathered round them; old ones reappeared and new ones showed themselves. "I never knew I had such good children or so many friends," Halliday said to



me yesterday evening. We were sitting in the drawing-room, and Bell was playing to us. I think the child feels parting with that splendid piano more than anything. Oliver had been singing, but he gave over, and went to have a talk to his mother, sitting down on a stool by the sofa, and making love to her. You know his ways, Frank, the coaxing young fellow! and your father and I drew up to the fire, and talked of old times softly while the music went on. The child played lively things at first, but by-and-by she changed, and it seemed as if she were telling all the trouble, and change, and grief, that had come into her world. I don't know much of music, but I think Bell has a rare talent, and we stopped our talk to listen. I saw your father looking round the room, and pretty enough it looked in the firelight, with all the pictures and pretty things about; and little Bell, with her bright curls, at the piano; and Oliver, great long-legged fellow! at his mother's feet; and then he put out his hand and took hold of mine and pressed it. "Well," he said, "it's not disgrace! thank God, it's not disgrace! so we can bear it." And then Bell was playing the Evening Hymn, and we sang it before we went up to bed.'

(*To be continued.*)

FEW AND SMALL.

IDLE fingers, idle fingers,
Shall I find you work to do?
No, for we can do but little:
We are small and we are few.

Idle fingers, idle fingers,
Though you be but few and small,
Think you not the hand would miss you
If you were not there at all?

London: Printed by John Strangways, Castle St. Leicester S

Up in a Balloon.

Idle fingers, idle fingers,
Pray you find some work to do;
Find some work and bravely try it,
Though you be so small and few.

Idle fingers, idle fingers,
Though you be so few and small,
Think you not that God will miss you
Working not for Him at all?

Idle fingers, idle fingers,
Listen what I tell you true,—
God, Who every hair has numbered,
Counts you up, though small and few.

Idle fingers, idle fingers,
Though you be but few and small,
God will love your little service,
If for Him you do it all. E. M. A. F. S.

A PERILOUS DESCENT.

FELIX MARABOUT was an ingenious boy, always making something—as châteaux or barracks, with pigmy lords and ladies, and pigmy officers and privates to match; windmills that could draw water, or watermills that could grind wind; horrible gases that choked the household; or queerly-named acids that ruined the carpets. But his great ambition was balloons. Oh, how he wished to sail the sky and moor his skiff to one of the young moon's horns! Nay, why should not cities, and castles, and populous streets, and market-gardens, and waterworks, be perched above the cloud-land, buoyed up by a host of balloons, and anchored to Mont Blanc? The people there would have plenty of high life by day and well-aired beds at night. But more of that anon, as they say. Félix must first ascend, and see how he likes to look down a thousand fathoms. His maiden voyage was accomplished with old Père the aeronaut, and they soon became fast friends. The inventive genius of Félix contrived a balloon, but as he was short of money, because he had lately spoiled a good Turkey carpet with nitric acid, his balloon was too cheap and flimsy for safety. And who was to go starward in this new air-ship? Félix would gladly have risked his own young neck, but his father would not hear of it, and Père said, 'Monsieur is right—quite right. Send up some rabbits, Félix; see what thy balloon will carry before thou riskest thy neck. I fear it's not so strong a thing as it looks.'

It was a fine summer morning, and Père was going up for the diversion of ten thousand people. Country folk were there, who had 'heard talk of going up i' th' air,' but could not believe it; there were children in shoals, happy and restless; hot men, blowing military airs out of their brass instruments, and making every one wish to march to death or victory; and there stalked about through the crowd the policemen, close-buttoned and stately. Félix was going up with Père for the seventeenth time, and his balloon, the 'Marabout,' was about to make a trial trip. The proprietor of the gardens had, after a long talk with Père, consented to let Jock and Quaggo, two of his monkeys, make the ascent, since a careful examination persuaded Père that Jock and Quaggo would so weight the 'Marabout' that they would have a gradual and delicious descent; and as there was not a breath of air they would, without doubt, drop as softly as a snow-flake into the enclosure they started from. A whisper of the novelty had circulated, and the balloon-stand was girdled by a larger and more curious crowd than usual. Père and Félix entered the car, and the 'Marabout' was manned by Jock and Quaggo, whose spirits were at the highest. A tow-line was attached to the top of the 'Marabout' and lashed round one of the stays of the 'Montgolfier.' Félix was in transports, and waved his banner over his head. He had no eyes but for the dome of his balloon. What Jock and Quaggo were doing, or how they relished their voyage, he could not say. How he longed for the moment when Père would let him cut the cord and liberate the 'Marabout!' Long had the aeronauts lost the deep bass of the trombone, and even the beating of the great drum was lost; the garden and its black hive of human ants had dwindled to a mere handbreadth; the great city was a cloud, the shining sea a silver shield.

'We are high enough,' quoth Père; 'now, Félix, when I give the word, you cut the cord. Now's the time! Out with your knife, and cut away!'

The boy was nervous, or the knife was blunt. Surely never was cord so long in cutting. Père was just rising to help Félix, when the last strand was severed and the 'Marabout' set free. But, alas for her and her voyagers! Jock and Quaggo had, in their antics, proved more than a match for their cage, and lo! the bottom of the car had gone its way, and now adorned the top of a fine fir-tree in the gardens, and the terrified monkeys had need of all their acrobatic skill to hold on by the rim and broken ropes, and each other's limbs and tails. But as the 'Marabout' began to descend a worse mischance befell the ship and her crew. Quaggo, in his agony of self-preservation, dashed his arm right through the weak wall of the balloon, and let out the gas. The wreck descended, far too rapidly to be pleasant or safe, and so Jock and Quaggo felt it; and dreadful were the faces they made. Félix saw that something was wrong, and many an upturned telescope told the same thrilling tale to those below. Well might the proprietor rant and rave, and walk about, exclaiming, 'There go my monkeys! Fool as I was to let them go!' A hubbub of voices arose, and swelled louder and louder. One roared for feather-beds, another bawled for a balloon to go up as lifeboat, a third was sure the breeze would blow the monkeys over and into the little lake, where a good ducking would be their worst fate. This suggestion, which came from a loud-voiced, good-humoured sailor, caused several to crowd into the punt that was tied to the steps of stucco, and the punt, resenting such a load, quietly turned bottom upwards, to the intense disgust of the people in it, who were instantly splashing in the shallow water, and to the amusement of the sailor who never knew any good come of landlubbers manning a ship. Meanwhile the balloon came on its destined way, but, happily, not at a very perilous rate, for the upper part was sound. But poor Jock and Quaggo! Look at them, tender reader, and

have compassion! See how they hang by each other, as a drowning man coils himself round his preserver! Down, down, down, down they go, fearful, trembling, grinning, chattering! . . . But why attempt to do what the artist's clever pencil has done so well? The painter can tell his tale in one moment, whereas the writer—be he ever so skilful—takes many minutes, and does not do it so well after all. They go—they vanish; and soon a mighty splash and wave-circles, that submerge the little island of rockwork and ferns, declare that the journey is finished. And how? The poor drenched monkeys were rescued, wrapped in flannel, and comforted with unlimited supplies of nuts and gingerbread. The proud swans sailed round and round, looking haughtily from under their black eyebrows at those who had rudely disturbed their peace and agitated their calm basin with a turmoil so sudden and tremendous; and I dare say we should be vexed, and possibly alarmed, if a meteor, in the likeness of a broken balloon and two half-dead monkeys, were suddenly to come right through the ceiling into our dining-room, with a flop big enough to make every glass on the sideboard ring again, and every one's teeth around the table chatter. G. S. O.

THE HAUNT OF THE FALLOW DEER.

By H. G. Adams.

THE haunt of the fallow deer!
Of the creature wild and free,
By the waters flowing clear,
And the stately forest tree;
Where the air is cool and sweet,
And all is calm and still,
And Nature in her green retreat
Sits throned, and fears no ill.

The haunt of the fallow deer!
Amid the bosky dells,
Where the blackbird whistles near
To the foxglove's purple bells;
Where the rabbit loves to sport
The bracken tall amid,
And the valley-lily holds her court,
By grasses tall half hid.

The haunt of the fallow deer!
Beneath the giant oak,
Where sounds no hunter's cheer
Nor echoes woodman's stroke;
Where the wild thyme scents the gale,
And the azure heath-bell swings,
And twinkling feet in the moonlight pale
Dance round the fairy rings.

The haunt of the fallow deer!
By the lonely woodland spring,
Where the bulrush lifts its spear,
And the honeysuckles cling;
Where waves the feathery fern,
And the sunshine falls in gleams,
That ever shift, and change, and turn,
Like the shapes that people dreams.

The haunt of the fallow deer!
By the moorland spreading wide,
Amid whose herbage sere
The red grouse loves to hide;
Where the fox barks from the hill,
And the owl hoots through the night,
And the glossy blackcock croweth shrill,
To hail the morning light.

The haunt of the fallow deer!
From cities far away,
Where twining roots appear,
Like serpents in their play;
Whereby are leafy nooks,
And mossy beds for rest:
Oh, throbbing brows, and troubled looks,
Here cease your weary quest!

IT is a pretty sight to see the fallow deer in their haunts in some of the noble parks or forests of Old England; indeed, a prettier sight can hardly be seen than a group of these beautiful creatures, as they stand or lie beneath the shade of the giant oaks, or amid the brakes and ferns. Every movement of their bodies is graceful and easy, and any one watching them from a distance is tempted to draw closer in order to see them better; but some sharp eye soon catches sight of the approaching figure, and in a moment the whole herd is swiftly bounding away towards a more secure retreat. But the natural timidity of the deer disappears when they dwell in places through which people are constantly passing, and then it is not uncommon to see the gentle animals feeding from the hand, or allowing their soft coats to be stroked or patted.

Although the fallow deer has been common in England and other parts of Europe for a very long period, it is said to have been at first brought from Barbary, in Africa. In the English parks the deer has no enemies to dread, and seems the very image of peaceful happiness, but in some countries it has to keep constantly on the alert, lest some ferocious creature attack and destroy it. Our picture shows one of its foes, the cat-like lynx, in the very act of attacking a full-grown deer, which a minute before had been springing over the tops of the breezy hills in the joy of strength and beauty. Little dreamed he of the crafty lynx lying in ambush behind a low shrub, as, nearing the brow of the hill, he was about to bound down its grass-covered sides to rejoin his companions in the valley below. A spring like that of a tiger, and in a moment the paws of the lynx are around his neck, and their long claws driven deep into his flesh, while the sharp teeth are tearing at his throat. In vain the poor deer tries to shake off his cruel enemy, and at last, bounding in his agony high into the air, he falls bleeding and dead upon the grass.

The fallow deer is about three feet in height, and of a reddish-brown colour spotted with white. Its flesh, known as venison, is very tender and delicate, and considered superior to that of any other kind of deer. Of the beautiful antlers, or horns, which only the males possess, the first pair do not make their appearance until the beginning of the second year, and are straight and small. Every year afterwards the horns are increased in size and become more branched, until the sixth year, when they reach their full growth, and then are renewed.

H. B. A.

Fallow Deer and Lynx.

'THE PRIZE' for Girls and Boys. Price One Penny every month.
May be had everywhere.

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Chatterbox.

"I say, Tom, just get up and look out of window."

HALT!

(*Continued from page* 108.)

E told the Colonel in our turn all about our doings in his absence, and I described my peril in the chalk-pit.

'It was all my own fault,' I ended up bravely: 'if I had only minded what that old man told me and stopped with Frank, I should have been saved all the danger and fright, and have been in at the death.'

'Ah, Tom! you can't make up your mind to halt under any circumstances; but perhaps you did not recognise your old man as a regular commanding officer, so I don't think we need call it mutiny this time.'

I looked at Frank; we had dropped all such talk since the bad news had come, for we thought it might touch on a sore place, but the Colonel did not seem to remember it.

'We shall not make a soldier of you, Tom, after all, I'm afraid; at any rate, not a regular. You must be a bandit or a brigand, with a short cloak over one arm, and a hat with a feather in it, and high boots, and a dagger in your hand, and your belt full of revolvers and bowie knives, and all manner of murderous weapons.'

'Yes,' joined in Frank, 'like the pictures in the toy theatres; penny plain, twopence coloured, don't you know.'

'Never mind,' I said. 'I'd rather be that than one of a dozen British soldiers that you cut out in a line, all as alike as so many peas—a dozen red coats, a dozen bearskin hats, and a dozen stupid faces, that are pushed on to the stage sideways in a row and off again the same, to the tune of "Rule Britannia."'

'Oh, yes!' Frank went on, 'I know your style of thing—

> "I'm a robber, I'm a thief,
> I'm a great guerilla chief;
> I can either knock you down,
> Or prig your pocket-handkerchief.
> Every kind of villainy
> Cometh natural to me,
> And I finish all my actions
> With a one, two, three."'

'I'll finish you with a one, two, three; see if I don't,' I replied. 'But the worst of it is, I shan't know which you are in the rank, so I shall have to lick the whole regiment to make sure of getting at you at last, because it's quite impossible to tell t'other from which.'

Then all at once I saw Frank's face change, and he gave the fire a great poke which sent the log rolling off into the fender, and I knew he had all at once remembered the change in his prospects, and I was so sorry to have touched on the raw; but it was the Colonel's fault for beginning the joke, and I think he saw this, for he changed the subject and went back to my danger in the pit, speaking very seriously.

'It was a great danger, Tom. Ah! my lad! when death gives the order to halt, there's no disobeying it.'

'It did come into my mind, Colonel, down there, when I was thinking of things you had said to me, that it was like a halt in my life.'

'In the march of your young life, Tom. Thank God the order did not go forth; it's given so suddenly sometimes, so unexpectedly, and that stern Captain's order cannot be escaped. But Death is only the captain after all, Tom, "under authority" himself, though he has soldiers under him, and can "say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh." He is only carrying out the General's orders, and he is only terrible when we forget that "the Banner over him is Love."'

CHAPTER XIX.

THE next day was our last at the Hermitage, and we did not do much except pottering about the place, taking the dogs for a walk, and superintending the making of Nan's clothes; which was going on all day, in Mrs. Cheviot's room, at any time that Mrs. Cheviot and Polly could spare from their regular work. Mrs. Cheviot's mouth and the front of Polly's dress were continually bristling with pins, and all sorts of mysterious expressions were used, such as 'pipings,' 'crossway pieces,' 'on the straight,' 'the way of the stuff,' and so on; and the Colonel complained that all his domestic comfort was sacrificed to Nan's dressmaking, and he pretended to find a pin in his tea, and a reel of cotton in his hot water, and a long piece of stuff in his soup at lunch, and Nan's red cloak on his towel-horse, instead of a towel.

'I hope I have not done any harm to it,' he said; 'but who was to know that it was not a new kind of towel?' Which sent Bertie rushing upstairs, to see if the cloak was all right.

But though this last day passed away so quietly, we had not come to the end of our adventures at Silverbridge. We went up to bed early that night, and I was fast asleep, dreaming that Mrs. Cheviot herself was being cut up into a frock for Nan, and that Polly said she ought to be cut on the cross, but that she was too good-natured just now; when, all at once, I felt some one pushing at my shoulder, and woke with a start to find a white figure by my bed, and to hear Frank say, in an excited whisper,—

'I say, Tom, just get up and look out of window. Don't wake Bertie.'

'Whatever is the row?' I asked; tumbling out of bed.

'Why, there's a fire somewhere, and near, too!'

And sure enough the window showed a crimson sky, flushing, and throbbing, and shooting, and making the moon look pale, and indistinct, and sickly; and puffs of smoke, first lurid and then black.

'What time is it?'

'I don't know; but Uncle Will has come up to bed.'

'Does he know?'

'I heard him moving in his room as I came by; but his window looks out the other way, so he would not see it so plain.'

'Let's go and tell him.'

So we went across and knocked at the Colonel's

door. He opened it to us, and we found him dressed and prepared to go out. He had only noticed the glare when he put out his candle to get into bed, and he had dressed again at once to go and see what he could do to help. He was not best pleased to find us awake.

'I thought I should leave you safe in bed, out of harm's way,' he said. 'What power of mischief could have woke you up, I wonder, when you generally sleep all night like the seven sleepers of Ephesus? And now, I suppose, you won't be satisfied unless you go out with me. Come! you had much better jump back into bed and go to sleep comfortably again, instead of standing about shivering in your nightshirts.'

'I say, Colonel,' said Frank, 'do let us come.'

The Colonel had come across into our room to see the fire from our window while he buttoned his coat. 'You'll only get in the way and get hurt, and I shall have the worry of thinking that you are getting into mischief. The fire is at Farmer Ford's, about a mile off, and I expect his ricks or barns are burning.'

'We won't get in the way or get hurt,' said I, 'if you'll only let us go.'

'Well, on with your clothes, then, and come after me double quick; but look here! you must mind half a look from me, and if I say, "Off with you home!" you must be off like a thought, without my speaking or even looking again.'

We both of us declared that we would do everything he told us, and we were soon dressed and running down the road as hard as we could go in the direction of the fire. The Colonel had gone on before us, and we did not overtake him till we reached the scene of action. It was, as the Colonel had thought, Farmer Ford's barns that were burning; old, wooden, thatched things, with ivy over them and moss and house-leek on the roofs. He was an old-fashioned farmer, like Farmer Blossom, and he looked askance at the modern improvements, and thought there was something wicked about steam-ploughs and threshing-machines, and 'he never knowed no good to come on 'em;' and he would thump his great fist on the table and offer to back his best ploughman, with a good team, against any great, smoking, screaming steam-engine in the land; and he would open his big mouth and laugh a great, hearty laugh, at the new-fangled farm-buildings, where there was not a straw out of place, and the pigs were as clean as Christians—aye! and cleaner, too, than many of them. 'Well!' he would say, 'to my mind pigs is pigs, and it is their nature too, as the hymn says; and whatever folk will come to with their machines licks me! They'll milk the cows and hatch the eggs by steam next, I warrant.'

And, indeed, his farm was a much pleasanter sight than Mr. Newman's model farm at Hinton, where everything was done in the newest, and best, and dullest manner. The great straw-yard was good to see at milking-time, with the sweet-breathed, sleek cows standing patiently waiting for Betty, and her tin pail and one-legged stool. The sides of the yard were shut in by the picturesque old barns, and cow-houses, and stables, with scarcely a straight line among them, and flocks of pigeons sunning themselves on the mossy roof. On the fourth side was the rickyard, the farmer's great pride, for there was not another such in the county; and at the corner by the rickyard, shadowed by an old walnut-tree, was the gate into the road, a favourite perch of the great Dorking cock, the king of the yard, where he would stand, crowing hoarsely, and flapping his wings, and looking down at the wranglings of the ducks in the pond close by.

In the large barn the wheat used to be beaten out with flails, and winnowed with a wheel with four sails; while the fowls collected in a greedy, pushing crowd round the doors, to catch the grains that flew out to them. In the barns and outhouses there were all sorts of nooks and corners, where fat, fluffy hens could get off and lay their eggs in seclusion, and sit in peace and bring out troops of little soft balls of chicken without any one to interfere with them.

But it was a very different scene now, when Frank and I turned the corner and came in sight. The fire had begun in the cowhouse. One of the men had been smoking, and had carelessly dropped a glowing match-top among the straw, where it had lain and smouldered, and at last gained strength and crept on, till it burst out in the midnight, and roused the farmer from his slumbers. The few neighbours who ran together with the first alarm said he was like a man beside himself; rushing hither and thither, half-dressed, tearing his hair (what there was of it), and accusing first one and then another of having been the cause of his misfortune, and at last relapsing into silent despair, as he stood watching the flames gaining ground every moment.

None of the men seemed able to suggest anything except that some one should go for the fire-engine, which was done, I believe; but as it was five miles off, it did not make its appearance till it was no longer wanted; and the men stood about in helpless groups, willing enough to be of use if they only knew how to begin.

(To be continued.)

CREATION.

The following words can be made out of the letters in 'Creation:'—

Ace	Canter	Enact	On	Rioter
Acorn	Canto	Enactor	Once	Rote
Acre	Car	Ice	One	Tan
Act	Care	In	Or	Tar
Action	Cart	Into	Ornate	Tare
Actor	Cat	Ire	Race	Tea
Air	Cent	Iron	Rain	Tear
An	Certain	It	Ran	Ten
Ant	Cite	Near	Rant	Tenor
Arc	Citer	Neat	Ranter	Tent
Are	Coat	Net	Rat	Tie
Art	Core	Nice	Rate	Tin
At	Corn	No	Ratio	Tire
Ate	Cornet	Nor	Ration	To
Atone	Cot	Not	Recant	Toe
Can	Crate	Note	Rein	Tore
Cane	Crone	Notice	Rent	Trace
Canoe	Ear	Oar	Retain	Train
Cant	Earn	Oat	Rice	Trice
	Eat	Oaten	Riot	Trio

C. R. A. B.

WONDERS OF NATURE.

WATERSPOUTS.

THE picture will do more than any description in prose or verse, both of which we are able to offer our young readers.

Let us try prose first.

A thick dark cloud is observed by the seaman's eye, and exactly underneath it the sea appears troubled. The waves seem as though they met in the centre of the agitated space—they are whirled round and round; and soon from this circling heap of waters a cone or column, shaped like a trumpet, arises, and moves upward. At the same time another trumpet-shaped column comes down from the dark cloud, and in a few minutes' time the two cones meet in mid air, and form what is called a waterspout, a very wonderful and beautiful sight. The sides look dark and the interior light, and the whole spout appears hollow. When it is formed the waterspout walks in majesty upon the sea, and is, of course, a dangerous neighbour; for no ship could escape if it were sucked into the vortex, or whirl of wind and water. The spout moves with the breeze, is often attended by a rumbling noise, and is sometimes half a mile in height. When it disappears, which it does within the hour at the outside, the vapour of which it is formed is either taken into the clouds or it descends into the sea, like a heavy downpour of rain.

In calm weather waterspouts generally preserve an upright appearance, but sometimes they move obliquely, or leaning on one side. This is caused by the lower part travelling more quickly than the cloud above. In this case the spout soon breaks in the middle, and sometimes with a loud report, sometimes with a flash of lightning from the cloud.

The shapes of waterspouts differ. In some, the place where they join is like a wasp's waist, and the trumpet is but two or three feet in diameter: in other spouts the shape is nearly that of a cylinder, but rather increasing in width at the upper extremity.

At the time when they occur the wind is shifty, the clouds are black, hailstones fall, and other symptoms of what we call thundery weather are perceived.

It often happens, too, that the trumpet-shaped cones disperse before they can touch each other.

And now for the poetical description of a waterspout. Who was the bold penman that ventured to describe in verse this wonderful wonder of nature? It was William Falconer, who was born at Edinburgh about the year 1730. His father was a barber, and all his brothers and sisters were deaf and dumb. He entered the merchant service at an early age, but happily his education had not been neglected, and the poor sailor lad became a man of letters. In one of his voyages from Alexandria to Venice the ship was wrecked on the coast of Attica. Falconer and two others were the sole survivors. The awful scenes he had witnessed moved him to write his famous poem *The Shipwreck*. This clever and amiable man was afterwards lost at sea in the *Aurora* frigate, which sailed for India in 1769, and after touching at the Cape of Good Hope was never heard of any more.

Among Falconer's best descriptions is that of the waterspout, which we here transcribe, for the benefit of those readers who do not possess the poem, or who, possessing it, never read it.

The ship had neared Candia, or Crete, and now was gliding away from that isle, so

'Tall Ida's summit now more distant grew,
And Jove's high hill was rising to the view,
When on the larboard quarter they descry
A liquid column towering shoot on high;
The foaming base the angry whirlwinds sweep,
Where curling billows rouse the fearful deep:
Still round, and round, the fluid vortex flies,
Diffusing briny vapours o'er the skies.
This vast phenomenon, whose lofty head,
In Heaven immersed, embracing clouds o'erspread,
In spiral motion first, as seamen deem,
Swells, when the raging whirlwind sweeps the stream.
The swift volution; and the enormous train,
Let Sages, versed in Nature's lore, explain.
The horrid apparition still draws nigh,
And white with foam the whirling billows fly.
The guns were primed; the vessel northward veers,
Till her black battery on the column bears:
The nitre fired; and, while the dreadful sound
Convulsive shook the slumbering air around,
The watery volume, trembling to the sky,
Burst down, a dreadful deluge from on high!
The expanding ocean trembled as it fell,
And felt with swift recoil her surges swell;
But soon, this transient undulation o'er,
The sea subsides, the whirlwinds rage no more.'

One allusion here may require explanation, viz. that about the black battery and the firing of the nitre. The fact is, when a waterspout comes too near a ship, the sailors often aim a cannon ball at it, in order to destroy the column before it can do them any mischief.

Falconer was a thorough sailor, kind, generous, and benevolent. His poem has been well termed 'a grammar of his professional science.' When it first appeared it was called a second Homer, and the Duke of York, eager to honour the sailor poet, became his patron, and advised him to quit the merchant service for the Royal Navy, in which after seven years he perished, as we have already mentioned.

G. S. O.

THE STORY OF AN INDIAN THUG.

A MOHAMMEDAN gentleman, in relating the story of his own life, gives a startling account of a Thug, in whose company he spent a night of terror when he was running away from an unkind stepfather:—

The Thug appeared as a tall, well-made Muslim, of about forty years of age. He seemed a traveller like myself. When he came up he accosted me politely, and asked me how I was, and where I was going? I told him I was going to Gohad on business. Hearing this he replied, 'I am going there also;' but, continued he, 'I fear we shall not reach the place until after the sun is set, for it is at least four miles distant.'

Waterspouts.

I did not at all like the man's appearance, but he was a good talker, and put me more at my ease very soon. Just as the sun was setting we stood near an old mosque by a river-side, and I told my companion I meant to rest here for the night. He said it was a bad place to spend a night in, being infested by robbers and wild beasts, and he advised me to go on to Gohad. But I said I did not care either for thieves or tigers, for I had not a single piece of money about me, and I thought I could keep the animals at bay by lighting a good fire in the middle of the entrance. 'Very well,' answered the stranger, 'do as you please.' I then undressed and bathed in the river, whilst my companion looked on. Afterwards I said my prayers, and we then entered the old mosque, where I collected wood and made a large fire in the doorway.

The stranger, whose name was Jumà, meaning Friday, offered me some bread, which I refused, being suspicious of him still. I ate a frugal supper, and then became overpowered with drowsiness; but Friday would talk, and soon I was aroused to wakefulness by a horrible conversation. He told me, if I would swear on the Koran never to divulge the secret he would show me how to grow rich in a very short time. Like a young simpleton I swore as he wished, and then asked him eagerly to tell me the secret. He then told me he was a Thug, and that he killed travellers very easily, and so made his fortune.

As a proof he opened a long bag which hung at his waist, and poured out a stream of gold pieces. There were no less than a hundred and twelve; this I know, for he counted them one by one as he put them back. Instead of being pleased, I was horrified at the sight of Friday and his blood-stained gold. However, I spoke as coolly as possible, and, after some more conversation, I still felt very sleepy; so, to keep myself awake, I went to the fire, pretending to light a cigar, and burnt the tip of my finger badly. Friday now entered further into his wicked schemes, and related to me the various ways in which he killed unwary folk.

I was horrified by his cold-blooded stories, but I kept my self-possession, and asked the murderer if he did not relent at all when he was doing these acts of cruelty? 'Not a bit!' said he; 'we get used to it. No butcher thinks anything of killing a sheep or a cow. At one time, indeed, I was disgusted at it, but I care nought about it now. And why should we care for those whom we kill? If I were dying of hunger there is not one of them would give me a rupee, nor would they care if I were hanged.'

He then told me how he had once killed an old priest, and had afterwards gone and related his relentings and scruples to his mother, who cured him of such squeamishness by taking him to the market-place, where she bought a farthing's worth of prawns. 'When we got home my mother said, "Can you count these prawns?" "Yes," said I, "but it would take me the whole day." "Then," replied she, "you silly boy! do you see how many lives are destroyed here for a farthing, and you, like a coward, are concerned about the death of one old priest, who had a foot already in the grave?' 'This advice,' said Friday, 'I followed, for it satisfied me, and I never afterwards felt any remorse for my deeds.'

It was now nearly midnight, and my comrade told me I ought to go to sleep for an hour or two whilst he kept watch. But I said I had burnt my finger and could not sleep, and I desired him to lie down and let me watch. He accepted the offer, and was soon snoring like a pig. I had a great inclination to cut the wretch's throat, but I dared not for fear I should get into trouble. So I sat still, and waited with impatience for the morning; and never did the chirping of the birds sound so welcome before. I got up quietly and left the mosque, and ran as quickly as possible to Gohad, often turning round to see whether the terrible Thug was following me. When I reached the town the gate was just being opened, and the guard asked me why I was in such haste. All I could say was, 'The Thug! Jumà, the Thug!' 'Where is he?' said they, for the wretch was known by name far too well. I told them, but I refused to go with them. Whilst they set off for the mosque I was taken before the Minister of the State, and was being examined by him when I saw the brutal Friday brought in, pinioned and wounded. I wonder what he thought of me? The miscreant was beaten and spitted on, his person was then searched, and the bag of gold taken from him; after which he was tied to the mouth of a cannon and blown to atoms in an instant, and thus his wretched life was ended.

Having performed my ablutions at a well, I offered thanks to Allah for this narrow escape, and begged forgiveness for having broken my oath, which I had twice taken upon the Koran. I was afterwards carried, much trembling, before the Minister again, and rewarded with his thanks and twelve gold pieces out of Friday's hoard, because I had been the means of destroying a man who had killed so many, and who would have killed many more, had I not caused his long black catalogue of crimes to have an end in so summary a manner.

G. S. O.

TUSCARORA.

FAR across the rolling prairie,
Where the red-skinned Indian roams,
Certain brave and daring white men
Builded for themselves new homes.

Round them was the mighty forest,
With its silence calm and still,
And across the village common
Ran a streamlet from the hill.

And the mill would clatter daily,
Mingling with the children's song;
Flowers were blooming, sweet perfuming,—
Was there any room for wrong?

Ah! then came the dread Fire Water—
Brought by hunters from the East—
Changing, by its horrid magic,
Thinking man into a beast.

Seldom now the mill went clacking,
Or the children sang or played,
And the clanging of the anvil
Seldom woke the forest's shade.

To the village came an Indian
Who had fallen in disgrace—
Ere he tasted the fire-water
He was leader of his race.

Now he came forlorn, degraded—
Begging at a white man's door—
'I will toil and I will labour,
Give me rum, I ask no more.'

Much he drank, but laboured little,
Rolling drunken on the green;
All of manhood lost within him,
He, who once a chief had been.

One day came a cry of terror,
That the tribes were risen for fight,
And the sunk, degraded Indian,
Left the village in the night.

Months flew by, the fight was over,
And the Indian came back
In his gorgeous paint and feathers,
As still on the battle track.

His old comrades of the village
Filled for him a draught of rum:
'Drink, old fellow! drink a welcome!'
But the Indian chief stood dumb.

Flashed his eye like prairie lightning,
Came his voice like thunder's sound,—
'White men, I am Tuscarora!
Dash the poison to the ground!

I'm a king among my nation,
Long as winds and waters roll;
I am not that wretched Red man
Who for rum would sell his soul!

I have prayed to the Great Father
From my lips to keep away
The Fire Water; brother white men,
Kneel and pray the same to-day.'

BLAISE PASCAL.

—o—

ONE bright summer evening at the close of the year 1632, a pale, thoughtful-looking man, was sitting in one of the rooms in a large house in Paris, at a table strewn with books and maps, whilst his little bright-eyed boy looked up wistfully into his face longing to ask a question.

'Father,' he said at last, 'do tell me what geometry is, for I don't know.'

Etienne Pascal smiled down at the young face. 'Oh, Blaise, do not trouble your little brain with such things. Geometry, my boy, is a science which teaches us how to form figures in a precise manner, and how to consider their length, breadth, and depth. Now you cannot understand that?'

'I will learn,' said the little Blaise. 'Father, you must teach me geometry.'

'No, no,' said the father; 'run into the garden and play with your cousin—you are too much given to poring over books already.'

'Oh, dear father, I do not care for Charles; let me stay here with you; and please tell me if the lines you draw are a part of geometry?'

Etienne pushed aside his books with a sigh and took the little lad's hand. 'I will take you a walk then, Blaise, but I forbid you to ask me any questions about geometry.'

The boy obeyed, and as he never repeated his inquiries, and gradually left off lingering so long in the study, his father believed that he was at last full of the amusements of his age, and that circles and triangles were forgotten.

But one day when he entered a lumber-room at the end of a long corridor, which was seldom visited, he saw his little Blaise kneeling on the floor, a piece of charcoal in his hand, busily engaged in drawing triangles, circles, and parallelograms, so intently that he never noticed the opening of the door, and only raised his head as he heard the voice of his father, who exclaimed, 'Child, what are you doing?'

'Oh, father, don't be angry; indeed I could not help it. You see, though I tried and tried I never could put geometry out of my mind—not even at night, so I came here to try and work out those lines.'

M. Pascal looked, and saw with surprise that little Blaise had without instruction attained a wonderful degree of knowledge, and from that time he ceased to check his desire to learn, and he carefully instructed him in his own beloved science.

Before he had reached nineteen years of age Blaise Pascal had written several scientific books and treatises, which made his name famous; but after some years of these studies he resolved to devote the rest of his life to an exposition of the Christian religion. For this purpose he began a great work, but he was repeatedly interrupted by attacks of illness, and it was only partly completed when he died.

At thirty years of age Blaise was nearly worn out from his excessive application to study, but a fright caused by an accident in driving caused him a severe shock, from which he never really rallied.

His gentle, patient nature, shone more brightly during his bodily pain, and his charity and kindness to the poor continually increased. Yet in all his good deeds Pascal never allowed his name to be known, and only after his death was it found out that he had been so generous in his alms. One of his favourite maxims was, 'If you wish others to speak well of you, never speak well of yourself.'

But his illness drew to its close, and after much suffering and great patience the gentle spirit of Blaise Pascal returned to the God he had loved on earth, in the month of August, 1662. He was but thirty-nine years of age, but he had lived long enough to leave behind him a name which will live amongst men, both for his splendid talents and for the self-denying benevolence and the deep piety of his heart.

Blaise engaged in drawing triangles.

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Chatterbox.

Fire at the Farm.

HALT!

(*Continued from page* 115.)

WELL, discipline is a great thing, certainly! When the Colonel arrived he took the lead directly, and the men all fell into doing exactly what he told them, as naturally as possible. Every moment brought more people from other parts of the village and neighbourhood, only crowding and running up against one another if they were left to themselves, but all of great use when they were once put in the right place and told what to do. Happily there was not much wind, but what there was, was away from the farmhouse and towards the rickyard, so the danger was in that direction. There was little hope of saving any of the farm-buildings or barns, for the fire was spreading so rapidly; and the Colonel first told off a certain number of men to bring out the cart-horses, cows, and pigs, and take them clear out of the way, so that they might be safe and not add to the confusion; and this was not by any means easy work, as the poor creatures were so frightened by the noise, and smoke, and glare. Others were set to watch lest any bits of the burning thatch and timber should fall in the direction of the farmhouse.

The Colonel had a large garden-engine for watering the lawn, and this was soon fetched and set to play on the ricks that stood nearest the barn, while men watched the sparks that blew towards them, and were ready to put out any that lighted in places of danger. The Colonel himself, and some of the men he had most confidence in, devoted themselves to pulling down and chopping away, as much as possible, of the old stable, which stood farthest from the fire and nearest the ricks; working away with axes and hatchets and deluging the heaps of rubbish they pulled down with buckets of water. The heat in the strawyard, where the Colonel was at work, was intense, and the glare almost blinding. Every now and then a beam or a bit of roof would fall in, and the flames would shoot up with a burst and a roar; and through the great barn-door it looked like a white-hot furnace. I got hold of an axe and made my way to the Colonel's side. A man with a bucket of water stumbled against me and said roughly —

'Come out of the way, stupid! it ain't no place for children.'

I grasped my axe and went on; he should see I was no child, but as good a man as he. The Colonel was just mounting a ladder as I reached him, but he turned in a moment when I spoke.

'Now, look here, Tom,' he said; 'you promised me not to get in the way. This is no place for you. Don't let me see you in the yard again; keep right away outside the gate, for if I come across you again I shall send you home. Come! give that axe to Joe here, and off with you.'

I gave up the axe to the very man who had sworn at me and turned away, feeling horridly sulky and crest-fallen. It was too bad, I thought, to treat me like a baby and send me just to look on, and have no share in all the excitement and danger. I was half inclined to go home, but I thought I would find Frank first; 'I dare say, though the Colonel let him come with him, I don't see why he should go where I don't. It's a horrid shame!'

But I had not seen Frank in the yard, and he was not outside the gate when I got there. The small duck-pond by the gate was nearly empty, and never had much water; but in the field on the opposite side of the road there was a large, round pond, and I found that a double line of men and boys had been formed between this pond and the rickyard, to supply the garden-engine and the water that was poured on the rubbish-heaps; one line passed the full buckets, and the other handed down the empty ones. They were all working as steadily and orderly as possible, and the buckets passed wonderfully quick; and I stood watching them for a minute before it occurred to my mind that Frank might be among them. Of course he would be in the rickyard, as near to the fire as he could, and just where he could see all that went on; but he was not there, and I asked a man if he had seen him.

'Yes, sure, Master Frank's right down at t'other end of the row.'

And there he was, standing second from the pond, behind a tree and quite out of sight of the fire, and only intent on handing pail after pail as quickly as possible.

'Hallo, Frank!' I said.

'Hallo, Tom! What have you been after?'

'Oh, nothing much; there seems nothing to be done.'

'Do you want a job?'

I thought he was going to ask me to take his place, as he wanted to have a look at the fire; but it was not that.

'I wish you'd just take the place of this little chap next me for a few minutes; he's pretty nearly beat, and his hands are as cold as ice—aren't they, Bill?'

The poor little fellow could hardly answer for crying, though he had stuck to his place as bravely as any one; and without another word I slipped into his place and was hard at it. My hands did not get half as cold as you might have thought, for the constant movement kept them warm; but my feet got very numb, and my clothes drenched with splashings from the buckets. We could not see anything that was going on, and we were only doing work that the farm-boys could do quite as well, if not better; but I forgot to be sulky or envious of those who were in a more important or exciting place. We managed to keep up a good deal of chaff and fun to pass the time.

'Now then, clumsy!'

'Come, butter-fingers!'

'Are you going to be all day with that bucket?'

'Hallo, there! are you asleep?'

'Tom, you beggar, you're drinking the water!'

'Not I. It's too strong for my head—for outward application only.'

Now and then we got some news passed along the line.

'The barn roof has fallen in;' or, 'It's nothing like so fierce as it was.'

I don't know how long we had been at it, but it must have been some time, judging by my aching arms and numb feet, when we heard the Colonel's voice.

'Well done, my lads! well done! You have saved the ricks, and the fire has nearly burnt itself out. Master Ford has some supper for you, which won't come amiss. I think you have done enough for the present. Hallo, Tom!—and Frank, too?—I didn't see you.'

The men and boys all went off very willingly to have some supper, and a warm in the big farmhouse kitchen, and Frank and I went with the Colonel to take a look at the fire before we went home. The place looked very different to what it did when I saw it last. The barn where the fire began had entirely fallen in, except one piece of wall, blackened and smoking, which stood up gaunt among the heaps of ruins still flaming in many places. All the rest of the buildings were roofless, and the rafters charred and black, and there was still a large piece burning, though the flames were evidently abating, and had no longer the furious strength they had at first, when it seemed as if they were resolved to lick up and devour everything.

There was not much more to be done now, except to pour water on the rubbish-heaps near the ricks; and there were so many people collected by this time that we could well be spared.

'Well,' said the Colonel, 'there's no more for us to do just now, so we may as well take ourselves off and get dry, and ask Mrs. Cheviot to find us some supper or breakfast, whichever you like to call it, for it's five o'clock.'

CHAPTER XX.

I SHALL not soon forget that breakfast by candle-light on the last morning of our Christmas holidays at the Hermitage. Bertie, and Mrs. Cheviot, and Polly were all up when we got home, and dry clothes, and hot coffee, and a good fire were ready for us, which were very comforting. Going to bed was quite out of the question, though the Colonel strongly advised it; but our train was to start at half-past eight, and we were all broad awake, and there seemed so much to be talked about, going over all the adventures at the fire, comparing notes with one another, and describing it to Bertie; so it was put to the vote, and it was carried by three to one that we should stop up, and the Colonel shrugged his shoulders, and said he supposed we must have our own way as it was the last morning. We had such a merry, jolly breakfast, and it took such a long time that the Colonel said we should all be turned into coffee-pots if we drank any more. Then we gathered round the fire, and talked till the Colonel got up and pulled back the curtain and showed the first pale glimmerings of the wintry dawn in the east, and then we sat silent a bit, watching the light strengthen and spread, and the misty air grow clear and transparent, and soft streaks of silver come on here and there, and brighten and deepen, till the sun itself pushed back the clouds and looked at the world—not the golden, midsummer sun, but a pale brother of his, more like the moon.

(*Concluded in our next.*)

GOOD FOR EVIL.

LEWIS HARROWBY had been a spoilt boy, he was now a selfish man. He had never been very straightforward in the matter of marbles and cricket-bats with his schoolfellows in the days of his youth, and now in affairs of business he was shifty and unprincipled. He had grieved and perplexed his too fond mother till she sank into her grave, and now he was at once the care and anxiety of his only sister's life.

Lucy Harrowby and her brother lived with their grandfather at the old Bank in Danesley, and Lewis called himself a clerk in the bank; but he was very seldom on his stool there, much oftener amusing himself in the town, or running up to London after other pleasures. Meantime he left his work to James Farrar, his neighbour in the office, a steady middle-aged man, whom he despised as slow and vulgar, because his father and mother had been small tradespeople, and also because he refused to join him in his search after amusement.

The Harrowbys and the Farrars years ago had been old friends, and pretty nearly on an equality as regarded standing in the world, but misfortune and sickness had brought the one family low and raised the other to a position of some importance in Danesley.

Old Mr. Harrowby continued, however, staunch in the old friendship, and so there was a certain jealousy of the trusted, respected clerk in the younger man's mind. He was always finding fault with him to Lucy, since he hardly dared do so to his grandfather, and declaring it a shame that he, a gentleman's son, was compelled to spend his days beside one so low-born and mean-spirited.

Poor Lucy held her peace, it was no use arguing; in her secret heart she only wished that her brother had been as steady, as reliable, as James Farrar. She, poor girl, had a hard life just now, to hear constantly from her grandfather complaints of Lewis's conduct, which she knew to be too well founded, and to try to keep her brother from further misdoings.

After a time old Mr. Harrowby went up to London himself on business, and though he was always kind to Lucy, the girl was thankful to be spared the effort of screening her brother's misdeeds from his keen gaze. She was only seventeen and he was seven-and-twenty, but their positions were reversed—she was his guardian angel.

And then, in the midst of this seeming quiet, came a worse blow than ever. Lewis himself dealt it. He came into his sister's room one afternoon as usual smartly dressed, a flower in his button-hole, but a scowl of uneasy anger on his brow.

'There!' he said, bitterly, putting a letter before the girl. 'I suppose you have got my grandfather to inquire after your paltry bit of money, and thereby ruined me, who had simply borrowed it for a time! You see what he threatens. There is now nothing before me but ruin!'

The words were hard. Lucy took the letter tremblingly and read it. Old Mr. Harrowby plainly told his grandson that he suspected he had been tampering with his sister's fortune, and if he found

it to be true he threatened the utmost rigour of the law.

'Have you had the money then, Lewis?' Lucy timidly asked.

'I wish I had never touched the paltry stuff!' snarled Lewis.

It was confession enough.

'Could you not return it?' pursued the girl. 'Indeed, indeed, Lewis, I never guessed you were involved when I let grandfather try to invest the little sum better. I thought it would be for your good, as well as mine.'

'Girls are always fools!' said the unprincipled man.

'But, Lewis, it is yours; you shall have it; tell grandfather so, or I will, and then all these proceedings can be stopped.'

But Lewis answered scornfully: 'You are a minor; you can do nothing. No, I am lost, and all through you! Unless,' and he brightened a little,

'any of your friends could let you have some money, so that I could get out of the place before my grandfather returns. That is my only chance.'

But poor Lucy was in despair. She ran over her list of rich friends, and turned away hopelessly. Many a one visited her and smiled on her, but to how few could she tell her troubles, and ask for real help? Whether Lewis deserved such anxious care she never stopped to think; she only knew he was her brother, and in danger of a prison.

'It is my only chance,' repeated Lewis.

'Oh, brother, brother! if this were set straight, would you try to keep right?' asked the poor girl.

'If I was once out of this mess I would leave the place, go to Australia, and work for my living honestly,' said Lewis, this time in earnest. 'I am sick of this sort of life: I believe I could do better away from the lot here I have got in with. But it is hopeless! the old man means vengeance this time, and I have not a shilling!'

'Oh, don't say so!' said poor Lucy. 'And now, Lewis, keep quiet to-day, and come to my room at bedtime; I shall know then if I can help you.'

The girl had made up her mind. If any one could help her it would be James Farrar. The bank shut at four o'clock; she dared not go to him in the office, secresy was so necessary in the matter; she must dine, too, as usual, with her brother to avoid all notice; but that meal over, she ran to her room, dressed herself in her plainest clothes, and slipping out at the garden-gate crept like a guilty fugitive out into the quiet moonlight. James Farrar lodged in a cottage a mile off, he liked the fresh air and the walk after work.

Fortune favoured her; her gentle knock was answered by James himself, his landlady had gone out to visit a sick neighbour. To the kindhearted man she told her tale, and he listened and pondered, his face darkening at times over the hearing of it. He was not surprised, however; he had had his suspicions already of young Mr. Harrowby.

Within half-an-hour he let Miss Harrowby safely and quietly out of the cottage, and watched her down the high-road with a sigh.

'If I had only had such a sister!' he murmured.

Then he went indoors, collected various papers, called on his landlady, announced that he should be late in coming home, and went in search of Lewis. From him, after a little difficulty, he obtained all particulars of the manner in which he had abstracted his sister's money through his connexion with the bank, and after learning what hopes there might be of recovering a part of it, he placed a hundred pounds in the young man's hands, and desired him to pack up instantly and start for Liverpool on his way to Australia.

This from James Farrar, who never spent a shilling on his own pleasure! Lewis Harrowby tried to stammer out his thanks, but the bank clerk stopped him.

'The Harrowbys have befriended the Farrars before now,' he said, almost coldly. 'I am glad to be able to do something for them.' And then he telegraphed to old Mr. Harrowby to stay all proceedings, as he had the clue to the missing money.

The message came just in time. The old man's wrath had subsided, and he was no longer anxious to expose his nearest relative, should he prove to be the defaulter; so he laid the telegram before the London branch of the business, with the remark that his head clerk was a sharp fellow, and went home to consult with him how the sinner should be sheltered and the Harrowby name guarded from blemish. And first the trembling, broken-hearted old man, shook his benefactor by the hand.

'You have done nobly,' he said; 'you have preserved Lucy and myself from lifelong misery. That wretched lad has a chance now.'

Yes, gay, gentlemanly Lewis Harrowby, was a homeless wanderer now, depressed and self-reproachful at last; while in quiet James Farrar's eyes there shone a new light. If he had no home-ties, those dear to him without his home looked to him for help and comfort. That was worth all he had done, worth all the money thrown away on one who had wronged and despised him.

Many a long consultation with the trusted clerk had Lucy and her grandfather in after days about Lewis's future. He wrote once, and in that letter was a kind of acknowledgment to James Farrar of the injustice he had done him in deeming him mean and miserly. He had found out at last that to be lavish with other people's money is not generosity, and that a careful man need not be a miser. But the spoilt boy could not change all at once, and those left at home had many an anxiety over him.

He was always a wanderer—in the bush, at sea, in the gold-fields. There he died of fever and exposure.

An honest companion forwarded home the possessions of the dead man, at that time amounting to a small sum, with his will. Everything was left to James Farrar, 'one who returned me good for evil.'

Nothing more; but the words gave the survivors hope that their wanderer had come to a better state of mind before death.

Old Mr. Harrowby is very ailing and broken now, but the bank still flourishes in the name of Harrowby and Farrar; and Lucy Harrowby is now Lucy Farrar, finding rest and comfort in the thorough integrity of the man she has married. H. A. F.

OUR NEW KITTEN.

IT came from Hereford to the north in a tiny hamper, on which a card was fixed bearing these words in big letters—'Please take care of me.'

We sent our cook to the station to meet Kitty, and she found the guard carefully holding the basket containing his small passenger, and trying to soothe the pettish little cries that issued from a hole in the wicker-work. 'Miaw, I am hungry! Miaw, I am thirsty! Miaw, I am tired of being shut up here!' said our new kitten.

Its troubles were nearly over, however,—a two-mile walk, or rather jog, in cook's arms, and the hamper was opened on the kitchen dresser, and out jumped, to the admiration of four pairs of eyes, a fluffy grey kitten. Such a beauty! with long hair, a compact little body, and a tail that promised to be something wonderful. We called it 'Charlie,' on the spot, after the friend who sent it to us.

People's memoirs always contain a notice of their parents and early home, so it will not be out of place here to speak of Charlie's mother, and even grandmother.

The former was a superior cat, the petted darling of a country-house in Herefordshire; long-haired, Persian-breed, and aristocratic. She was of such a gentle disposition that people never thought of casting in her face the one degrading circumstance of her early life, namely, that she was born in an apple-tree, a gnarled old tree with a hollow trunk. And this brings us to grandmother, who was not long-haired, but a simple old peasant cat, living in a cottage very happy and contented till one dark day her mistress (for some unaccountable reason, to Pussy's thinking) chose to change her house, taking Pussy with her.

Now cats, you all know, are supposed to love places better than persons, and this one certainly did so; for the moment she was given her freedom back she trotted to the old home, much surprised to find a new mistress in it. In cat language she expressed her

wish to resume her own corner in the cottage, but this she was not allowed to do, and the door was shut in her face. So poor grandmother, determining not to leave her favourite haunts, fixed upon this hole in an apple-tree for her country quarters. And there Charlie's mother was born; a silky, beautiful creature, so different to the other stumpy kittens of the village that she was taken to the Great House and offered to the Quality.

I could tell you a great deal about Charlie's mother and her pretty ways, how she would come out walking with her mistress, and then scuttle away into the hedge like a rabbit after a few hundred yards, but it would take me too long; and besides, I must go back to her kitten, Charlie.

He was evidently of a cheerful, sociable disposition, for he had hardly stretched his legs after his five hours' cramping in the hamper when he playfully slapped the fingers of the nearest bystander, and then plunged his head into a saucer of milk.

No shyness, no crying for mother in Herefordshire. He was pleased with everything, and when put on the floor instantly capered up to the old cat of the house, and without introduction begged to be friends. Old Pussy put up her back, hissed, spat, and struck Charlie a good blow with her fat, white-stockinged paw. 'None of your forward manners, sir!' she said, as plain as words could speak.

But Charlie was not forward, only loving and friendly; so he next tried our dog, who is a nervous old Skye called Topsy.

But Topsy was no comfort either; he didn't like being sidled against, he saw no fun in his tail being pulled, or his eyes dashed at when they winked, by a frolicsome kitten; and it ended in his running out of the room, or bolting through the window whenever he saw Charlie coming near, with that delightful little movement composed of a hop and a bound and a wriggle, which we all thought so enchanting. It was a great pity, for it was a necessity of Charlie's nature to have playfellows.

The vine-leaves outside the window waving in the wind were rather amusing; so was her master's beard, when it wagged as she sat on his knee; and some children staying in the house, with bare little twinkling legs, were better still: it was a regular game for him to hide in the bushes, and dart out upon them: Jack and Osbert, very small men, were not quite sure at first whether to take it as fun or fright, but they ended in enjoying it as much as Charlie: and in those days, if ever you got a near view of our new kitten, it was wrapped up in a braided pinafore or clasped very tightly round the body by fat wee hands.

'He do 'crat so,' said the small men; but in justice to Charlie I must say I only wonder he did not scratch more, he was held in such odd ways.

And then the children went away, and Charlie took to the bad habit of looking for playfellows out of bounds. He was always now being brought home in some strange servant's arms, an apron twisted over his head, and the message, 'Please 'm missis' compliments, and is this your little cat? Cook, she screamed when it come in our kitchen, she thought it were a young fox.'

And then Charlie would be produced, not a bit alarmed at the dangers he had passed through. All this time, however, Charlie was also paying court to our testy old cat and our nervous dog. Old Pussy had been mistress of the house (in the cat line) for eight years, and she wasn't going to give in to harbouring a pert kitten in her house, she said; so, finding she could not frighten it away by hissing and slapping, she refused to come indoors while it remained and lived chiefly in the garden, or sat brooding on the window-seat.

I think Topsy was first won over, at least I know, one summer's day, I saw him lying on the sunny gravel-walk with Charlie stretched out beside him, Puss patting doggie's tail at every wag. Topsy looked much ashamed of being caught with the upstart, and got up as if it was an entire mistake. But Charlie would not be cold-shouldered. At first Topsy screamed and ran away whenever he dashed at her. (Topsy does not fear the biggest rat, but has as many imaginary terrors as any fine lady); but in the end she allowed Charlie his way, and was all the happier for it. And old Pussy came round by having a kitten of her own, whom she permitted Charlie to lick and fondle sometimes a little roughly, but he meant well.

And now you may see Charlie lying on the hearthrug between Topsy and old Pussy, all three as contented as possible. I don't say there isn't a little breeze sometimes; old Pussy, when she has had a bad night with the mice, is apt to be fretful and slap out in her old way; but Charlie is as gentle and good as ever, and only lies down near her with his head twisted into a comical expression, as if to beg the old cat to forgive him and laugh at him once more.

Of course Charlie is not perfect, but I do think he has the sweetest temper in the world.

He has his sins, though cook adores him; so she would fain conceal them. He broke some of the best tea-cups by trying, I think, to make a nursery among them on their shelf for old Pussy's kitten, and he *would* come in to prayers and not behave well. Once he went so far, finding people so still and silent, as to knock an egg-cup over and bowl the egg along the table with his paw.

Master had to pause in the reading then and interfere, and Charlie was banished from the breakfast room at prayers, though, being summer-time, he was apt to put his fluffy face in at the window all the same.

And now our new kitten is growing into a cat, and losing many of its playful ways. Still he will always be handsome and lovable, and his tail is more like a fox's brush than ever.

Before we leave him to respectable old cat-hood let us get a moral out of him.

You youngsters, who meet with shy or cross companions in your daily life, and feel tempted to let them alone, or at least to be cross to them, remember Charlie. He *would* be friends with those he lived with; he took slaps, and hisses, and neglect with equal good-temper, and so he won the day. Old Topsy and Pussy pretend they have to keep a firm hand over the new kitten still, but in their hearts they are very fond of him. You try *his* plan, and even very cross folk will grow fond of you.

H. A. F.

Charlie and Topsy.

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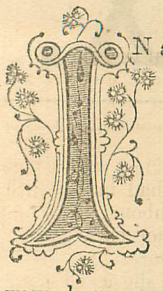
Chatterbox.

Harry," whispered Jack Henderson, "just listen to old Billy Brown."

AN EMIGRATION STORY.

CHAPTER I.



In a little village in Cambridgeshire, in the year 1853, there lived a famous woman, called Christina Helmore. I don't mean to say she was a great public character, but in her native place and the surrounding neighbourhood her name was a household word, and her affairs everybody's property.

She had been a widow several years. Her husband, who had always been more or less idle and unsteady, died 'of the public-house,' as she used to describe it, and left her with one son, a batch of unpaid bills, and the sum of three and ninepence. By dint of hard work, a brave and independent spirit, and a great talent for business, Mrs. Helmore (who had never before been able to make way against her husband's ruinous waste) got her head above water, paid all the bills, provided herself and her son with food and shelter, sent the lad to the National School, and settled herself in a thriving, though humble business.

She was a washerwoman; and though that doesn't sound much, in her case it meant a great deal. She was the most wonderful clear-starcher and ironer, the most perfect getter-up of shirt-frills, laces, babies' cap-borders, and all such delicate affairs, that had ever been known in those parts. So the neighbours said; and the fact that the squire's lady, and the lawyer's lady, and the doctor's lady, and all the ladies who had fine linens, and muslins, and precious lace, employed her, was strong proof of the truth of it. Indeed, she was one of those persons who cannot bear to half do anything. She washed her own coarse tablecloth as well as she washed the squire's fine ones, and, in its way, she washed the floor as well as either. She could not bear dirt, nor muddle, nor makeshift, in any shape. She would go without her food often to get time to scour her house or polish her furniture; and, excepting the time when she sat down to meals, she always worked from six in the morning till ten at night, like a machine. She was still in the prime of life (having married her worthless husband at a very early age), and had an iron constitution.

The people of the village used to look at her spotless doorstep, and shining windows, and starched muslin blinds; and they heard how she paid her way, and maintained herself and her child in comfort; and they were proud of her. She was held up as an example to all the slatterns for miles round, and her house was pointed out as a picture of what a cottage-home should be.

But Christina Helmore had her faults. She was vain of her bold spirit and capable hands, and she had a very sharp tongue. She never had patience with people who were dull, or stupid, and she said just what she thought (and prided herself upon it), without any regard to what came of it. Perhaps her trials had soured her a little, or perhaps the strain of her hard and constant labours fretted her; whatever the cause might have been, it was a fact that her temper was sharp, and that sometimes she would hardly bear speaking to. She was a good woman—a kind neighbour and an excellent mother. This was what the neighbours called 'her little weakness.' It was her 'easily-besetting' sin. And I am going to tell how she was punished for neglecting to watch and strive against it.

When her son had done his schooling, she started him in life in the high-handed way she had of doing everything, by getting work for him on a neighbouring farm. She did not ask him whether he liked it, it seemed to her the best arrangement she could make; and she just bought him a couple of grey slops and sent him off. He was a fine, bright lad, with a vigorous spirit like her own; but he had an element in his character which she did not give herself time to think of or understand—he had a desire for adventure and enterprise, which required more scope than his dull country life afforded.

He loved and respected his mother in a matter-of-course way, and he did as she bade him without grumbling. He took his dinner-bag (containing an excellent meal) away with him every morning, he plodded at his work all day, and he came home to a comfortable supper at night. But all day he was more or less alone, and at night his mother was usually too busy to be talked to. He made one or two efforts towards exchanging confidences, and awakening her interest in his boyish views of life; but she was busy, and matter-of-fact, and captious, and checked him at the outset. He was young, and had a world of sanguine hopes and ambitious dreams bottled up in his brain, with no safety-valve whatever for them.

So when the talk of the newly-discovered gold-fields came down to the village and set everybody's tongue going, you may imagine he was quite ready to take fire with the rest.

He was coming home from his work one night, when his attention was attracted by an unwonted crowd and an unwonted chatter of voices round the doorway of the Bull's Head on the Green. It was the public-house that his father had 'died of,' and his mother had brought him up to shun it as if it had been plague-stricken. But he could not pass it as usual on this occasion. The men who were talking were not regular public-house goers, and there was no drinking and brawling in the excited crowd. He saw one of his friends standing quietly looking on, and he joined him to find out what was doing.

'Harry,' whispered his friend, Jack Henderson, 'just you listen to old Billy Brown. He's been to London to see his daughter and her husband off, and he knows all about it.'

Billy Brown was the blacksmith, and he was holding forth in great style.

'All I can say is,' said he, 'that it's a great pity more of us don't do the same. You've no idea how everything is managed for you. You just go to the depôt at the Nine Elms, and there you're comfortably fed and lodged for nothing, till there's enough of you to go on to Southampton, and there you're in clover just the same till everything is ready for going aboard; and on the ship they give you bedding, and knives and forks, and everything you want for the voyage, besides a free passage. And then—when you get to Australia——'

'Ah, that's the best of it!' broke in Mills the shepherd. 'When you get there, there's your ten and twelve shillings a-day—as much as we make in a week at home—and twenty masters wanting you at once. And your wife, if she's worth anything, can earn you almost as much. And no rent—no taxes! And all the world before you, as one may say. Not to speak of the gold——'

'Yes, yes; it's the gold I think about!' shouted Tom Perry the baker. 'Tell us about the gold-fields, Billy.'

'Well,' said Billy Brown, 'I heard all about the gold-fields, and I tell you it fairly took my breath away. You just get a license, and a pick and a shovel, and you go and dig a hole; and, if you'll believe me, heaps of diggers have found a thousand pounds' worth, and more, in one pan of wash-dirt—all in a moment, as one may say.'

'I know what,' said Mills the shepherd, with a great sigh, when he had done; 'I shall go and try shepherding on the sheep-runs over there.'

'And I'll have a turn of gold-digging before the year is out!' muttered Harry's friend, Jack Henderson. 'Let's you and I go together, Harry.'

'Ah!' sighed Harry; 'if I only could!'

The boy went home with all his brain in a whirl, and thought he should never be able to plod on at the farm for eight shillings a-week any more.

CHAPTER II.

In the course of a few days Harry discovered that Mills the shepherd, and Jack Henderson, were seriously in earnest in their intention to emigrate to Australia. Mills was a middle-aged married man, with an industrious wife and three children; and Jack, a strapping young labourer, was an orphan, and quite as much his own master; and they were both so well suited to the wants of the Emigration Commissioners, that everybody felt sure they would have no difficulty in getting sent out, and told them they were wise to go.

Jack got hold of Harry in the hay-field one afternoon, and again expressed his desire that they should be 'mates,' and seek their fortune together.

'But they don't give you a free passage that you may go to the gold-fields,' objected Harry, who had been reading up the subject in borrowed newspapers.

'I know that,' said Jack. 'But the gold-fields can come afterwards, when we have turned ourselves round. We shan't go out as diggers, of course, but as agricultural labourers—just the people they want most. And there's a pretty penny to be got at that trade, if half what they say is true.'

'I don't think mother would agree to it,' said Harry, sadly.

'Oh, nonsense! She's a sensible woman. And she's so strong, and clever, she doesn't want anybody to help her to a living. She hardly sees anything of you as it is — I don't think she would miss you a bit. And think what it would be to come home in five or six years' time a rich man, and able to make her comfortable for life! She'd be glad enough you went, then, I'll be bound.'

Harry determined to lay the whole matter before his mother that very night. And so he did.

He had had his supper, and she was washing up the plates and dishes, when he made a great effort and plunged headlong into his scheme. He would not give her time to answer him, until he had poured all the wonderful details into her ear, and set the whole thing, as he thought, before her in all its bearings. Then he paused, and looked at her eagerly.

She had no idea of the painful anxiety with which he waited for her reply; and she had had a little squabble with her next-door neighbour, who had thrown some potato-peelings into her back-garden, and she was not in the best of humours.

'Where did you hear all that stuff?' she asked scornfully. 'From that ranting old Billy Brown, I suppose? He's been trying to stir up discontent all over the village since his daughter went away. It remains to be proved whether she has done such a wonderful good stroke for herself after all. Gold diggings! Yes, I know what gold diggings are! Your poor Uncle Tom went to California to look after gold, and he didn't find any till he was almost starved, and then he was robbed of it and murdered.'

Harry left the 'gold' topic immediately, and fell back upon the facts that were published in the newspapers, and in the reports of the Emigration Commissioners. But Mrs. Helmore was not in the humour for what she looked upon as idle gossip.

'Stuff and nonsense!' she exclaimed, impatiently. 'It's easy to tell tales of that sort, of a country that's on the other side of the world. Who's to prove whether it's the truth or not? And if it is the truth, there are less pleasant truths in the background to balance it, I'll be bound! Twelve shillings a-day, and nothing to eat, perhaps. There, take your candle, boy, and be off to bed; and don't let me hear of your gossiping and idling about the doors of a public-house any more.'

Harry took his candle, and went up to his little loft in the roof in silence; but there was an expression on his face, as he sat down on the edge of the bed, which it was a pity his mother was not able to see and take warning by.

'I'm nearly twenty,' he muttered to himself. 'I'm not a baby in leading-strings. She doesn't care a bit! I won't stand it!'

(To be continued.)

A SAILOR'S LOVE OF FAIR PLAY.

STROLLING leisurely about a shipyard in Pembroke the other day, we saw a regular hard-weather, sailor-looking tar from a man-of-war, who was watching two men dragging a seven-foot saw through a huge oak log.

The saw was dull, the log was tough, and the men were hard at work—pull, push, push, pull. Jack studied the matter over a while, until he came to the conclusion that they were pulling to see who could get the saw; and as one was a big chap, while the other was a little fellow, Jack decided to see fair play: so, giving the big one a clip under the ear that capsized him, he jerked the saw out of the log, and giving it to the small man he sang out, 'Now run, you beggar!'

OLD FOLK AND YOUNG.

'GIVE her a penny and stop her voice!'

'Send her away, never mind the penny!'

'Leave her alone, she amuses the children!'

Yes, she amuses the children, or rather she holds them spell-bound. They have left their play to stand before her, listening.

She of whom I speak is an old ballad-singer; she carries in her hand papers of ballads, a half-penny a-piece. She is infirm, and leans upon her stick as she sings, and her voice is weak and trembling. She is poorly clad, but clean and neat: you think, as you look at her, 'She has seen better days.'

They who would send her away are busy men of the world. They are talking of buying and selling; they are counting out gold and acres of land, and the singer disturbs them.

Nay, do not send her away; for I, too, am spell-bound. There is something in the thin, trembling voice, something in the far-away look, which holds me as it does the children.

'Is that song on the paper?' asks the biggest boy, turning a halfpenny in his pocket when the singer ceases.

'No, laddie,' answers she: 'that song is nowhere that I know of but in my heart.'

The laddie gives her his halfpenny nevertheless, and the old woman takes it as though it were a piece of silver. 'Thank you, thank you, my little gentleman!' and she turns away.

Now listen, children, and I will tell you what held you spell-bound as the old woman sang, and what gave her that far-away look. She has no home, and all the friends she ever had are dead and gone. That song she used to sing by her own fireside, long, long, ago; and just now, as she sang it to you, she seemed to see again the faces of those she loved: nay, it carried her back for a moment to 'home, sweet home!'

Children dear, it may be that some day—some day when you have left your happy childhood far behind you, and old faces are hidden from you—something may come to you as the song to the poor singer just now; may come and lift you up out of your cares and give you a glimpse of the past; and then, if other children stand before you and wonder because your thoughts seem far away, you can say to them, 'Ah! little folk, I have learnt a lesson since I was young like you; and I pray you be very gentle with the old, for you never know how they may be touched and what memories may be awakened by some sight or sound which no one else may heed, and which the busy world may scoff at, but which is to them like a song which lives nowhere but in their own hearts.'

E. M. A. F. S.

TONINO.

AS soon as it was dawn in the town of Brescia Tonino was to be seen opening his father's smithy, putting the shop in order, looking after the furnace, and then taking up either the file or the hammer, and finishing some work left undone on the previous day.

Tonino was only just fifteen, but knowing that his father (a poor man with a large family) needed him to put his shoulder to the wheel and help him, he had begun at an early age to work. The father's toil was much lightened by this, for, over and above the work his son did, he could be left in charge of the shop while his father was doing jobs at this or that house, without any danger of his losing his time by playing with idle boys. By dint of great attention he had already learnt his trade well, and his skill, together with his honesty, made him very popular with his neighbours.

One day his father had gone out to put some bars to the windows of a neighbouring factory, and Tonino had begun to polish hooks and point nails when a richly-dressed stranger entered the shop.

'Is not your father in?' said he to Tonino.

'No, sir. Do you want anything? I will fetch him if you like.'

'Oh no, it does not matter,' answered the stranger. 'I did want something, but I will go elsewhere.'

'Is it anything that I can do?' asked Tonino.

'You!' cried the stranger with contempt. 'You are too much of a boy. It is a great deal for you to know how to point those tacks as you are doing.'

Tonino was vexed, and with quick words gave the man to understand that he was worth as much as anybody else; that cleverness was not measured by years, and that he felt himself equal to do anything that belonged to his trade.

'Very well, then,' said the stranger, 'I would like to put you to the proof. Do you know how to make a key to a lock without having the key before you?'

'Do I know that?' cried Tonino; 'of course I do! You must take an impression of the wards in wax, and then copy it in iron.'

'Bravo! If, then, you have such a model you will be able to make this key?'

'Yes, sir; and very well, too.'

Thereupon the stranger drew an impression of a lock from his pocket and showed it to the boy.

'When can you let me have it?' he asked.

'By to-morrow morning,' answered Tonino.

'Ah! ah! I understand. You mean to wait till your father returns and get him to finish it, don't you?'

Tonino stoutly protested that he did not, and the man then said,—

'Promise me not to say a word of this job to your father, and if you do it yourself, instead of thirty pence I will give you a shining five-shilling piece.'

I leave you to guess whether Tonino was pleased or not. As soon as the stranger was gone he set to

Old Folk and Young.

work with all possible care. He melted the iron, beat it out on the anvil, and as he laboured he formed the most splendid projects with regard to the five shillings he was going to earn.

'To-morrow,' said he, 'the gentleman is coming. I shall give him the key, and he will give me my piece of money. Five shillings! You don't find that sum in the streets. And in our house it is a rare sight. The day after to-morrow is the fête day. I will buy two loaves of wheaten bread, a slice of sausage, a lump of cheese, and a bottle of the best. When the evening comes I will carry all this home. I shall find my father tired, not expecting to sup off anything better than a little black bread and a few potatoes. Then I shall spread out these good things before him. Oh, how glad he will be!'

These thoughts made Tonino quicker even than usual, so that by the following morning he had finished and polished the key. The stranger came and professed himself well pleased.

'You have not said anything to your father, have you?' asked he.

'Nothing,' replied Tonino, and the man slipped the five-shilling piece into his hand.

He turned his treasure over and over; one minute put it into his pocket and the next drew it out again, rubbed it, weighed it, and did nothing but look at it. The money gained entirely by his own labour seemed so precious.

The day after a noise of coming and going was heard at the bottom of the street, and people were seen running by.

'Father,' asked Tonino, 'may I go and see what is the matter?'

'Yes, go,' answered the father, who happened this time to be working in his shop.

Tonino ran out and hurried towards the place where the uproar was loudest. He heard here that the house of a goldsmith had been broken into and his jewels stolen. A new duplicate key had been found there, and the officers were going round to all the different smiths to find out which of them had been in league with the robbers.

Tonino did not for one instant suspect that he was at all involved in this, and he was returning to tell his father when he was astonished by seeing a large crowd near his home, and on pushing his way through he saw his father in the midst of the soldiers being led to prison.

The fact was, that the officers of justice had found here the wax model of the key Tonino had made the day before, which key was the very one the deceitful stranger had used to open the jeweller's strong box with.

The father declared he was ignorant of the whole matter, and the crowd knowing him to be a worthy man, did not like to doubt him; but the officers showed the false key made from the model in his shop, and they could not help concluding that it was he who had made it, and was an accomplice of the thief's.

When Tonino understood the state of affairs he began to wring his hands, and to tell how it had all happened.

Then the officers of justice released the father and took the son, and were leading him off to prison, where he would probably have long remained before his innocence could have been proved. But God willed that while they were taking him away he saw, crouching in a corner, the man who had paid him to make the key. He pointed him out to the soldiers, and the robber was at once seized.

The stolen jewels were found in his house, so that he could not deny his guilt. He was obliged to confess how he had deceived poor Tonino.

The robber was duly punished, and Tonino was set at liberty. His father succeeded in comforting him, and his neighbours still continued to like him; but he never forgot this day, and when the subject was touched upon in his presence he used to say, 'Ah, my friend, always distrust those who ask you to keep a secret from your father. Depend upon it, no good will come from a secret of that sort.' CARLO VITI.

HALT!

(*Concluded from p.* 123.)

'OM,' said the Colonel, putting his hand on my shoulder, 'I'm afraid I spoke a little sharply to you down at Ford's just now, but I was too busy to think what I was saying.'

'Don't!' I said; 'please, don't! I'm so ashamed of myself! I wonder you didn't send me right off home. I am such a blundering fellow, but I am sure I ought to have learnt a lesson to-night. I was as cross as a bear when I came out of the yard till I found Frank working away quite out of sight, and not wanting to push himself forward into the thick of it.'

'Oh, I say, come now!' said Frank; 'you worked quite as hard as I did, so you just shut up, or I shall turn round and butter you up, don't you know.'

So I was not able to say half what I meant, but, like the monkeys, I thought the more; and just then there was a knock at the door, and in came Nan, got up in all her glories of her new clothes, frock, cloak, and hat, and with a face of great importance, while Mrs. Cheviot and Polly had followed her to the door to give a parting pull to the skirt, and to hear what was said to her appearance; and as Nan turned shy at the door, a quality which she must have put on with her new clothes, Polly gave her a poke which sent her into the room with a jerk, and caused her hat to tip on one side.

'I say,' said Frank, 'here's a swell!'

'Come here, little maid,' said the Colonel, 'and let's have a look at you!'

So she came and stood by the Colonel's chair, holding her hands out stiffly, so that they should not touch her frock, and her chin up in the air as if she had to balance her hat, and her mouth drawn up to the oddest little button in the world, while Frank and Bertie walked round and admired the effect, and the Colonel patted her cheek and said, 'Very fine! very fine!' But somehow she did not look half as nice to my mind as she did in her old ragged hat and

torn lilac pinafore, in which she had looked down at me in the chalk-pit, and I sat quite silent with my thoughts gone back to that dreadful time when Nan had come like an angel of hope in my despair.

'Tom,' said Frank, nudging me, 'you promised Mrs. Roberts to give Nan a good scolding. Now then, strike up!'

'Oh, so I did!' I said. 'But I don't know what to say.'

And I looked at the Colonel for help, but the letters had just been brought in, and he was busy reading them, and did not seem to be listening to our talk.

'Come,' said Frank, 'fire away.'

'Well,' said I, picking up my courage, 'look here, Nan, you must be a good little girl; do you hear?' Nan nodded. 'And never be naughty.' Another nod. 'And go to school, and learn your lessons, and all that sort of thing.' Nan's face got more and more solemn with each nod. 'And look here, Nan, you must always do what you're told; because, you know, if a fellow—I mean a girl—is not obedient and that sort of thing, he's not—she's not—a bit of good in the world; so you mind that.'

And then Nan, having been schooled what to do in the kitchen, made a very low and slow courtesy, till the edge of her red cloak rested on the ground, with her black eyes fixed on me; and then, having safely got up again to her natural height, and feeling that she had done her duty bravely, she made off towards the kitchen and breakfast, hardly waiting for us to say 'good-bye' to her.

Mother says she shall never forget that it was little Nan who was the means of saving my life, and she has written to tell Mrs. Roberts that she will pay for her schooling, and she means to send her some clothes every Christmas. And she also begged Mrs. Roberts to let her have the little torn lilac pinafore she wore on that day, and she keeps it put away with her treasures—with the yellow curls that were cut off Bertie's head when he had brain fever; and a red pincushion, with the marks of Edie's young teeth when she was not a year old; and my first knitted baby socks.

The Colonel, as I have said, was busy with his letters, and they seemed very interesting, and Frank whispered to me that the one he was reading so intently was from his father. 'I hope there's nothing fresh gone wrong; he looks so serious.'

But it was nothing bad, I felt sure, when the Colonel looked up, and smiled, and said, 'Frank, my lad, I have some news for you.'

'I say, Tom,' said Bertie, 'we'd better go and see if our traps are all right,' thinking the Colonel would like to be alone with Frank; but he said,—

'No, you can stop, boys; for I want you to know about it.'

Frank looked very queer and odd, and sat fidgeting with a paper-knife, and not looking at the Colonel.

'Frank, you have been a good lad, and borne the change and uncertainty in your future like a young Briton; though I know you felt it pretty deeply. I've no sons of my own, and you and your brothers are as near to me as any one in the world, and——. Well, your father and I talked it over, and he has agreed to let me have a share in you. He won't give you up altogether—he is so foolish as to be too fond of you for that—but I'm to have a share and a voice in your plans; and if I say you're to go back to Harrow and then to Woolwich, he has promised not to say a word against it; and if I give you your commission, and see that you don't starve when you get it, I am not to be thwarted or bullied out of it.'

The paper-knife broke in half with a loud crack, and Frank got on his feet, flushed and quivering all over.

'Now,' said the Colonel, putting on a resigned expression, 'I am going to be bullied. I've gone through it all with your father and mother, and brought them to reason with the greatest difficulty, and now you are going to begin! It's really very hard that an old fellow like me should not have his own way just for once, without such a hullabulloo.'

I could not help laughing, the Colonel spoke so queerly; but Frank burst out, 'Why don't you do it for Oliver? He deserves it far more than I do, don't you know; and it's ever so much harder on him.'

The Colonel's eyes were moist as he answered, 'I knew you would say so. God bless you, my boy! but we have talked it all over, and looked at it in all its bearings; and Oliver, dear fellow, has considered it too; and we all agree that it is better for him to keep to his office. It's hard work for him at first, of course; but if it is right it won't always be hard, and he was one of the first to rejoice over your brighter prospects.'

Frank had got his face buried in his arms on the table, and was sobbing as if his heart would break, and he had not a word of thanks; but it did not need words to tell the Colonel, or us either, how much he felt. The Colonel gave him a few minutes to recover himself by reading out his father's letter; and when he had finished Frank was recovered enough to bring a very red face to view, and to begin, 'I say, Uncle Will, don't you know——' and then he subsided again.

It was nearly time for us to be off. Harkaway and the dog-cart were being brought round, and our bags were standing packed in the hall.

'I am glad, and no mistake,' I said. 'I shall see you in your uniform after all.'

'Yes,' said the Colonel; 'he has been marking time the last few days, and now the halt is over and the order to advance has come. And I may hope to see Captain Frank Halliday before my marching orders come from Head-quarters.'

We all knew he meant his death, and we were all round him in a minute, clinging on to his strong arms.

'I say! don't talk of it!' Frank said; 'we shall never be able to spare you, don't you know.'

'What!' said the Colonel, with a smile, 'don't you think I ought to be ready to obey orders after such long service; and would you young subs grudge the poor old Colonel his promotion?'

Nan in her new clothes.

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Chatterbox.

Jack and Harry leaving their native land.

AN EMIGRATION STORY.

(*Continued from page* 131.)

CHAPTER III.

A FEW days after this, a Mrs. Pelter came in to see Mrs. Helmore. She was an active, sensible, hard-working woman—a carpenter's wife, for whom Mrs. Helmore had a great regard and respect.

'Well, and where's Harry, Christina?' asked the good woman, sitting down by the fireside. 'I haven't seen him about this day or two.'

'He's a very naughty boy,' said Mrs. Helmore. 'He's gone off to see his uncle, without saying "with your leave" or "by your leave." At least I suppose he's gone there; he just sent a letter to say he should be away from home for a week or two, and that I wasn't to be anxious, for he would be all right. I went to his master, and he said he had asked for a fortnight's holiday, and as the hay was all in he had let him have it. I never knew Harry do such a thing before.'

'Have you written to his uncle?' asked Mrs. Pelter.

'Dear, no! where's the good? Brother can't read nor write. A letter would bother him out of his wits. And I don't want to blaze it all abroad that he's gone away without leave, for the boy's own sake. He's a good boy, Sarah, though he has his faults.'

'You don't think he's off to Australia?' asked Mrs. Pelter excitedly. 'All the young fellows think of nothing but Australia now.'

'Not he!' replied the mother, calmly. 'He would never go those lengths. Why, he's been ruled by me, as if he'd been a child all his life!'

'I know he has, Christina. And, if you won't mind my saying so, I think you kept the rein a little too tight! It's generally those sort of boys that break loose all at once, you know. And Harry is a man now, and a good six-foot high, if he's an inch.'

'I can answer for it that Harry won't break away so easily,' continued his mother, smiling. 'And you wouldn't have thought he was a man if you'd heard the nonsense he talked about Australia the other night.'

'Oh, he did talk about Australia, did he? Well now, Christina, you've no right to say it's nonsense. It's not boys only, it's sensible grown men and fathers of families that are not only talking of Australia, but are getting ready to go there. You don't think Pelter and I are particularly childish, do you?'

'No, of course not,' responded Mrs. Helmore, pausing over her ironing in wondering anticipation of what was coming.

'Well, we are going—there!'

Mrs. Helmore did what was a very rare thing. She put aside her irons altogether, and came to sit down by the fire. Certainly she did not think the subject of Australia nonsensical now.

'You don't say so, Sarah!' she said. 'Why, you're the very last I should have thought would do such a thing!'

'Well, at any rate, we are a-going to,' repeated Mrs. Pelter; and she thereupon entered into the subject in her business-like and practical way, and set forth all the advantages which had led them to take such an important step.

Mrs. Helmore listened, greatly interested. She asked many questions, and got satisfactory answers to them all.

Talking to Sarah, she thought, who was an experienced and prudent woman, was very different from talking with wild-headed and romantic Harry. Altogether, it was a very much more serious matter than she had supposed. When at last her visitor assured her that Pelter had had letters from relatives who were already settled in Australia, and who confirmed the truth of all the newspaper reports, she actually began to think she would like to go herself.

'If ordinary women have such good pay for washing, and cooking, and housework, how I should get on!' was the thought that passed through her mind.

Mrs. Helmore thought it all over very quietly, and made up her mind that, when Harry came back, she would tell him he might go, provided Government would let her go with him, making at the same time all sorts of plans for her own colonial future. As she was beginning to feel the house to be very lonely without her boy, a slatternly girl came running up to her in a great state of excitement.

'Oh, Mrs. Helmore! have you heard the news? Mrs. Mills' brother went to see her off on Tuesday, and Jack Henderson and your Harry were emigrants in the same ship!'

Poor Mrs. Helmore! She stood still for half a minute, staring at the girl; and then she dropped down on her doorstep like a mere heap of clothes.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT Harry Helmore did was this.

He told his grievances to Jack Henderson, and Jack advised him to be independent. They assured one another that Mrs. Helmore would and should be the greatest gainer by their taking matters into their own hands, and made that an excuse to silence all sorts of scruples, and to cover breaches of duty which they knew in their inmost hearts to be quite wrong.

However, time was short, and they acted in a hurry. Harry, being wild to go, stifled all misgivings. He drew a month's wages—all the money belonging to him, which Jack, who was better off, undertook to add to, if necessary. He tied up a few clothes in a pocket-handkerchief. Keeping their own counsel, the lads travelled to London by different routes, and met at the Commissioners' offices.

'Here we are!' shouted Jack, when he caught sight of his friend; 'keep up your pecker, old boy; we'll soon get our pockets full, once we set foot in Melbourne!'

'All right!' answered Harry. And he tried to think how jolly it would be to write to his mother as soon as he landed, and to send her his first wages.

The sight of a numerous crowd of would-be emi-

grants waiting to make application for free passages rather damped their spirits when they found themselves in the official waiting-room. They did not know how their genuine country faces and hard brown hands were envied by the greater number, as qualifications of the very first-class in the eyes of the keen-sighted inspector.

A great many went in to be examined, and came out rejected as unsuitable; but when, after long waiting, Jack and Harry presented themselves—with their broad shoulders, their tan and freckles, and their smock-frocks—they found themselves passed without difficulty. Cheered by this promising beginning, they went off to the depôt at the Nine Elms Station, and were there taken care of and provided for precisely as Billy Brown had described. After one good night's rest and three good meals the lads went on to Southampton, a crowd of emigrants with them, and crowds pouring after them; and soon found themselves on board the ship which was to take them out to their land of promise.

Provided with their tin pots and cans, knives and forks, plates and spoons, bedding, clothes' bags and bread-baskets, they took possession of their respective berths, and with hammer and nails, and a ball of twine, made their little preparation for the voyage.

Luggage and stores were soon all aboard; the friends of the emigrants exchanged their last kisses and tearful good-byes, and trailed back over the gangway with their handkerchiefs to their eyes; the emigration agent went off last, having seen that all was right and ready; and the steam-tug began to puff and pant, and to draw the noble vessel slowly out of the harbour.

'Well,' said Jack, as the young fellows stood together, looking their last on their native land, now green and beautiful in the early summer morning, 'we've done it now, Harry!'

'Yes,' said Harry, with tears in his eyes. 'I wouldn't care if I could have made it all right with mother. I believe she would have come round if I'd had a little patience!'

'It's too late to talk of that now!' said Jack. 'You must write and send her a lot of money, and then she won't mind.'

Harry determined that he would, as soon as ever he had it; but the thought did not give him so much comfort as it had done.

They had a rough voyage, but they were young and strong, and did not mind that. Storms and gales, and shipped seas and deluged cabins, did not distress them, as they did the women and children. And when at last they reached their destination, they both threw themselves heartily into the life and work they had chosen.

The ship went through the Heads one fine Australian spring morning, and came to anchor at night. Hobson's Bay was crowded with ships, lying silent and empty at their moorings. Their crews, for the most part, had deserted and gone to the diggings, or been put on board one of the prison-hulks for having attempted to do so; for this was the time when the gold fever was at its height. Jack and Harry had had to make an agreement before they sailed that they were not to go to the gold-fields for four years after their arrival in the colony—unless they repaid a proportionate part of the expenses of their passage, as compensation for the loss (in labour) to the colonial government; and they grumbled a little over this restriction when they heard and saw what wonderful success the diggers were having. Diggers just now appeared rolling in wealth—mad and drunk with it. They were seen driving about Melbourne in carriages, with their wives dressed in silks and satins beside them; they were seen, at all hours of the day, throwing away money upon any ridiculous extravagance, as if it were as easily come by as the dust of the streets. The two raw country lads stared at them in wonder, and thought they had themselves walked out of their sober life into a fairy tale.

It was a very good thing for them that they were debarred from gold-seeking at this crisis of their lives. It is very unlikely that they would have escaped the terrible temptations connected with it, the extent of which may be guessed at by the fact that hardly one of those 'successful diggers of the old days' is to be found in the ranks of respectable or independent people now, while the majority are the poorest of the poor.

(*Concluded in our next.*)

PIC-NIC IN THE RUINS.

THE ruins of the abbey looked bright in the summer sunshine, but not brighter than the faces of the young folk who jumped so lightly out of the waggonettes and pony-baskets which had carried Mrs. Harrison's party to the place where they had fixed for a pic-nic one July day. A large party of neighbours were there, and merry voices echoed amongst the crumbling walls.

The sun was hot, but there were shady nooks and corners where little groups could chatter merrily; and when the dinner-bell rung, and the hampers were unpacked, and all Mrs. Harrison's good things set out on the grass, it was found that no one had lost either temper or appetite by reason of the July warmth.

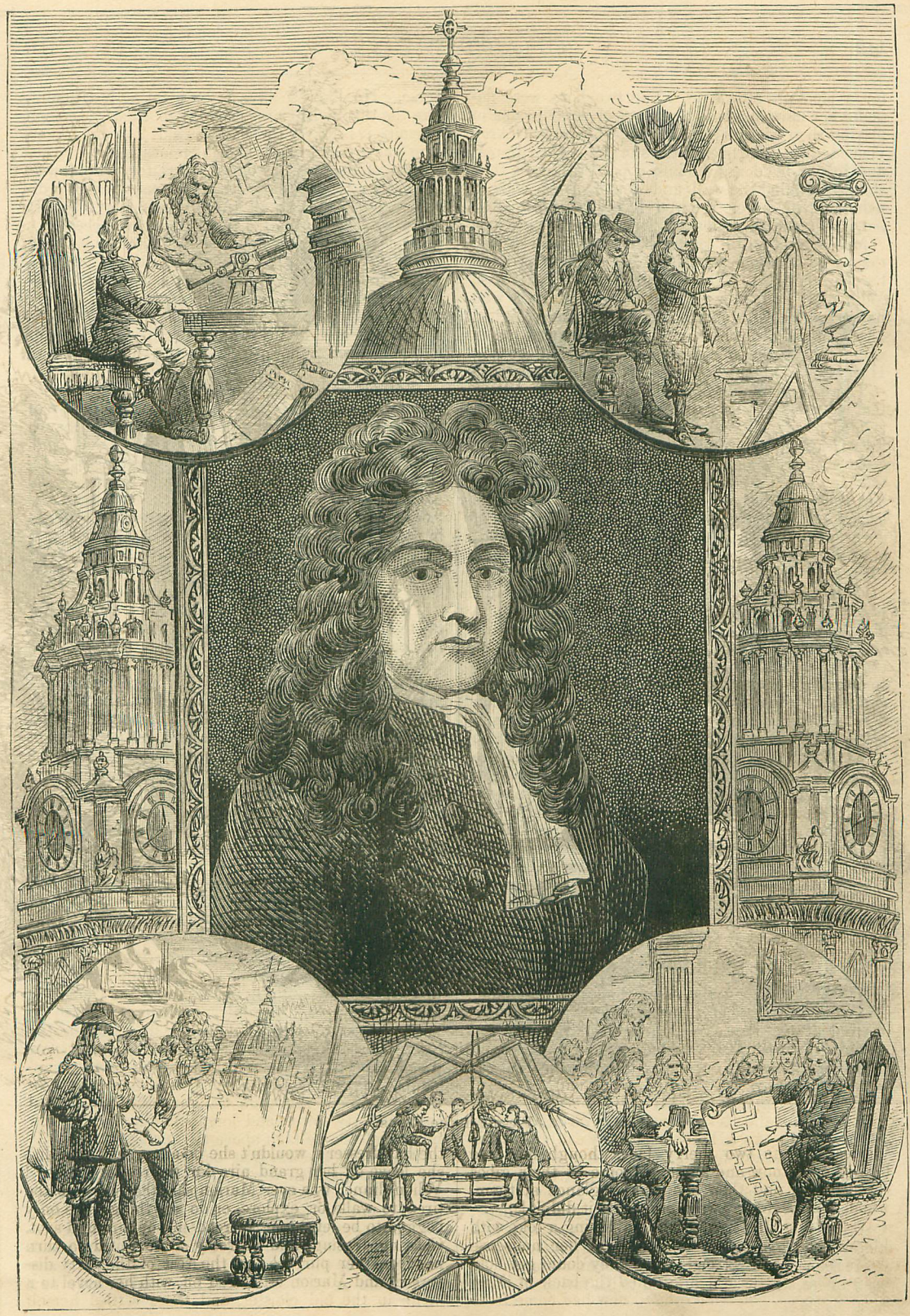
No one, did I say? I was nearly forgetting Marion D'Arcy, one of the oldest of the girls there, whose face certainly was not all sunshine, and who looked as if some one, or some thing, was not altogether pleasing to her. The fact is, that Marion was just beginning to believe herself 'grown up,' and she was vexed that she was invited where there were so many children, when only a fortnight before she had been to Lady Dacre's water-party with her parents! And now she looks somewhat cloudy because the other youngsters do not remember her dignity, and they joke with her, as they always had done before she went out into society.

Two of the lads at the pic-nic were making great fun of Marion—Gilbert Duncan and Harry Grey: they did not mean any harm, but they were just brimming over with nonsense, and Marion certainly was making herself a target for their arrows of school-boy wit. She did not talk much to any one, but what she did say was all about Lady Dacre's water-party—how delightful it was, how charmingly arranged, how beautiful the weather; and as to the woods where they dined, oh, they were twenty times better than the abbey ruins for a pic-nic! So she ran on, pretending not to notice the coughs and

Pic-nic in the Ruins.

'asides' of the two merry lads, though her face flushed every now and again as some of their gibes reached her, and then she shot a glance at them, which was meant to awe them—only it didn't!

Gilbert and Harry were bent on having a joke with Marion, which should 'take some of her nonsense out of her.' They agreed that if they could get hold of the coil of plaits which adorned the back of Miss D'Arcy's head, and which they knew had come from the hairdresser's, wouldn't she be angry, and wouldn't she leave off her grand airs for the rest of the day! When dinner was over Marion said that she was too tired to walk or explore, or do anything; she only begged to be left alone to read in some retired spot. Coaxing, teasing, and entreaty alike failed to turn her from her purpose; so the rest of the party dispersed, and Marion wandered off with her novel to a niche in the old cloister, and there settled herself



Sir Christopher Wren.

for a pleasant afternoon. The two boys were noticing her movements in the hope of some means of playing their trick on her: and so, when Miss D'Arcy yielded to the influences of the sun and a good dinner, and by-and-by dozed off into a peaceful sleep, they stole up behind the wall and detached the coils of hair, and, moreover, secured Marion's stylish little hat with it, and thus they left her to continue her nap.

Marion slept on till the tea-bell rang loudly, to call the party together. Her first care was to arrange her hair and hat, and then she found out her loss. With murmured indignation against the maid who had so carelessly fastened on her coil, Marion searched all round and about her for her lost treasures, but in vain; and in the midst of her search Gilbert and Harry came to inquire 'Why she didn't come to tea?'

There was no getting rid of them by saying that she was 'coming directly.' The boys had a sudden fit of politeness, which would not admit of their leaving her alone, and which caused the greatest interest as to why she could not come with them at once; and then, as Marion continued to face them and begged them to go away, Harry stole behind, and raised a cry which brought a dozen of the party to the spot. 'Thieves! thieves!' he shouted; at which every one came rushing excitedly to inquire, 'Where?'

'Marion's plaits! Miss D'Arcy's beautiful hair, which she wore at Lady Dacre's!' he cried, in affected distress, while Marion burst into tears from sheer vexation. No one could help laughing, try as they might; and even when Mrs. Harrison came to comfort Marion, and the boys' trick was discovered and they were forced to apologise, it was more than the unlucky girl could do to recover her spirits and laugh at the joke; but in the end her good sense came to her help, and she allowed Mrs. Harrison to replace the stolen plaits, and went back to the rest, resolving in her heart never to come to a pic-nic again 'with a lot of horrid boys.' The rude behaviour was, however, a good lesson, and Marion profited by it. A week after somebody gave another pic-nic, and the same young folk were there, and Marion D'Arcy did not play the great lady, but she was as merry and light-hearted a girl as one would wish to see.

M. S.

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN.

HOW few among the many thousand readers of *Chatterbox*, when they admire the grand Cathedral of St. Paul's, which now adorns London, think of the great man who built it, and of the many difficulties he had to overcome, in all ways, before it was built!

This great man was born in October, 1631; he was the son of the Rev. Christopher Wren, chaplain to Charles I. As a boy he was so weakly that his parents had a tutor for him, rather than send him to school; afterwards, getting stronger, he was sent to Westminster School, then under Dr. Busby, and in his fourteenth year he was sent to Wadham College, Oxford. From his earliest years he was always a clever boy, especially at mechanical inventions.

At the age of thirteen he invented an astronomical instrument, which he dedicated to his father in Latin verse. He likewise invented a planting instrument, like the turnip-drill now used in our fields. In such pursuits it is likely that he was aided by his father, who was a very learned and ingenious man.

One of the boy's inventions was for writing with two pens. 'By the help of this,' he says 'every ordinary penman may at all times be suddenly fitted to write two several copies of any deeds or evidences . . . there shall hardly be seen any differences between them,' &c. He designed a dial for the ceiling of a room. In his sixteenth year he made models in pasteboard of all the muscles of the human body.

In his eighteenth year he took the degree of B.A. at college; and in his twenty-fourth year his name had gone over Europe as one of the eminent men of science.

While at college his improvements and inventions make up a long list of fifty-three in number, many of the names of which young people will not understand; but we will mention a few of the simplest:—'To find whether the Earth moves;' 'The Weather-wheel;' 'The Weather-clock;' 'Perpetual Motion — the Weather-wheel and Weather-clock compounded;' 'Balance to Weigh without Weights;' 'To Write in the Dark;' 'Several new ways of Graving and Etching;' 'New ways of Printing;' 'New ways of Sailing;' 'Probable ways for making Fresh Water at Sea;' 'Ways of Submarine Navigation.'

The wonderful improvements in the art of printing made his double pen unnecessary; and the steam-engine of James Watt will pump more water in five minutes than Wren's in an hour.

No Englishman in his twenty-eighth year was more admired or respected at home or abroad.

About this time he had silently acquired great skill in architecture, or the art of designing buildings. Wren was appointed to assist Denham (the poet) in the office of Public Works, and the king wished to restore St. Paul's Cathedral—it was the old building before the Fire of London.

Wren wished to rebuild the church, and he went abroad to see the grand churches and to consult with foreign architects. On his return to England with sketches of all the churches of France, an event took place which settled the question whether the church was to be restored or rebuilt. On Sunday, September 2, 1666, the great fire of Fish Street Hill (known as the Fire of London), occurred; the east wind, swept the flames onward like a deluge. We are told, 'There was nothing but lamentation. Churches, halls, exchanges, hospitals, ornaments, house to house, street to street, far from each other, for the heat, with a long set of warm weather, had prepared everything ready for the fire; having consumed the connecting streets, the fire, aided by the scaffolding, seized on St. Paul's Cathedral, and soon its lofty tower, and long-extending roof, threw up a bright flame high above the surrounding fires.'

When the fire was put out and some order restored, the question again arose whether St. Paul's was to be rebuilt on Wren's new plan, or merely patched up. He had much to contend with before the matter was settled as he wished. The king desired him again to survey; but his ideas were much too grand for the people of the time. London really had to be rebuilt. The king showed Wren's new

plan to the council; but it was so altered that Wren hardly knew it again.

While St. Paul's was building, there was the Monument rising to commemorate the fire. The Exchange and Temple Bar were among the earliest finished works of Wren. Wren was knighted at Whitehall, November 12, 1673. During the progress of St. Paul's, Wren received 200*l.* per year.

Though London was rebuilt much as the court and citizens pleased, it was deemed necessary that the churches should have the same builder as the cathedral; of these he planned and built no less than fifty. These will give an idea of the varied talent of this great man. While all this was going on he found leisure to attend the Royal Society, and to interest himself in all the great questions of the day.

For a period of thirty years Sir Christopher watched the progress of the great work which is always linked with his name. When, in 1710, in his 79th year, by the hands of his son, he laid the highest stone of the lantern on the cupola of St. Paul's; there were few who had worked with him to rejoice on the occasion except Mr. Strong, the master mason. The pious architect performed this act with humility and prayer; and, as it was publicly known, all London flocked out to see him and the ceremony. But while the old man was thus placing the crown on his work he knew that much envy existed; and it is painful to note how his last years were made sad by his enemies.

In 1718, Sir Christopher Wren, in his 86th year, was dismissed from his office as Surveyor of Public Buildings and another was put in his place; the insult less affected him than his friends. He died February 25, 1723, in his 91st year, and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

We are told that Sir Christopher was short in stature, his forehead broad and fair, his nose slightly aquiline, his eyes large and expressive, and his whole aspect stamped with intelligence.

Sir Christopher Wren was a grand example to the young—how early talents may be improved by industry and energy, and how they may be used for the public good.

RANGER.

A LITTLE boat in a cave,
And a child there fast asleep,
Floating out on a wave,
Out to the perilous deep—
Out to the living waters,
That brightly dance and gleam,
And dash their foam about him,
To wake him from his dream.

He rubs his pretty eyes,
He shakes his curly head,
And says, with great surprise,
'Why, I'm not asleep in bed!'
The boat is rising and sinking
Over the sailors' graves,
And he laughs out, 'Isn't it nice,
Playing see-saw with the waves!'

Alas! he little thinks
Of the grief on the far-off sands,
Where his mother trembles and shrinks,
And his sister wrings her hands,
Watching in speechless terror
The boat and the flaxen head.
Is there no hope of succour?
Must they see him drowned and dead?

They see him living now,
Living and jumping about;
He stands on the giddy prow,
With a merry laugh and shout.
Oh, spare him! spare him! spare him!
Spare him, thou cruel deep!
The child is swept from the prow,
And the wild waves dance and leap.

They run to the edge of the shore,
They stretch their arms to him;
Knee-deep they wade, and more,
But, alas! they cannot swim.
Their pretty, pretty darling,
His little hat floats by;
They see his frightened face,
They hear his drowning cry.

Something warm and strong
Dashes before them then,
Hairy and curly and long,
And brave as a dozen men;
Bounding—panting—gasping,
Rushing straight as a dart,
Ready to die in the cause,—
A dog with a loyal heart.

He fights with the fighting sea,
He grandly wins his prize;
Mother! he brings it thee
With triumph in his eyes.
He brings it thee, O mother!
His burden, pretty and pale;
He lays it down at thy feet,
And wags his honest old tail.

O dog! so faithful and bold;
O dog! so tender and true;
You shall wear a collar of gold,
And a crown, if you like it, too.
You shall lie on the softest satin:
You shall feed from a diamond dish;
You shall eat plumcake and cream,
And do whatever you wish.

Will you drive in a coach and four?
Will you ride the master's hack?
Shall the footman open the door,
And out of your presence back?
Shall the mistress work you slippers?
Shall the master catch you flies?
Will you wear the mistress's watch?
And the master's best white ties?

O Ranger! do just what you choose;
Old friend, so gallant and dear;
What churl would dare to refuse
To drink your health with a cheer?
Old friend, in love and honour
Your name shall be handed down,
And children's hearts shall beat
At the tale of your renown.

From 'Poems written for a Child.'

Ranger.

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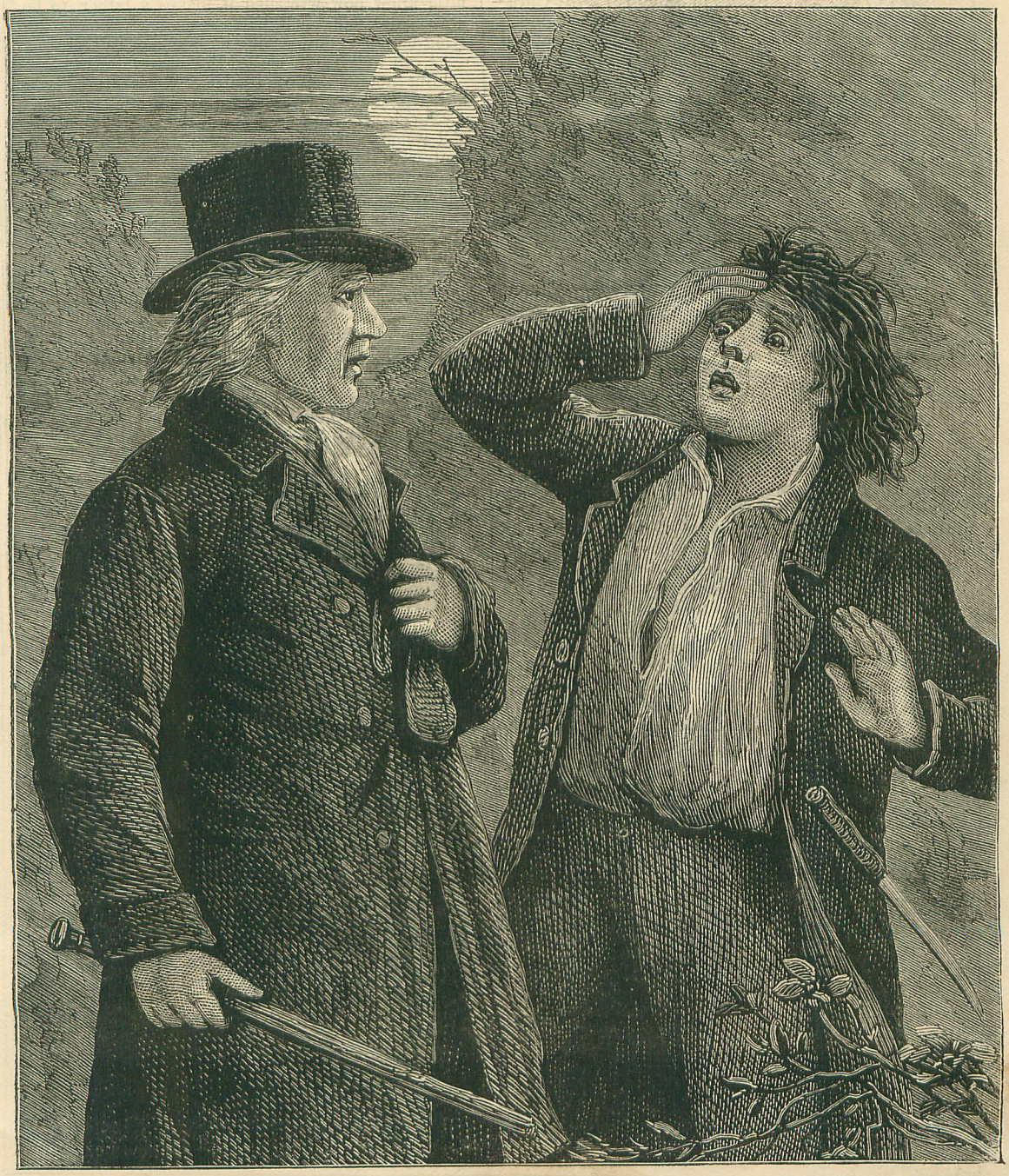
Chatterbox.



The Good Doctor and the Robber.

THE TWO OLD FRIENDS.

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

From the Flemish of Hendrik Conscience, by James F. Cobb.

CHAPTER I.

ONE evening in June, 1812, M. Christiaans, better known by the name of 'the good Doctor of Elsene,' entered an inn in the village of Etterbeek, near Brussels. There, in a dark corner, he saw one of his friends, the cattle-dealer Marck, sitting with his head resting on his hands. He clapped him on the shoulder, and cried out in a joking voice,—

'A strange place for you to go to sleep in, Mr. Jan! Forgive me for disturbing your sweet dreams.' But he now saw a look of deep sadness on his friend's face.

'Are you in trouble?' he asked him.

'I came from Anderghem, and am tired,' was the reply. 'To sit here by oneself is not cheering, especially when one has little reason to be gay.'

'Well, I will stay half an hour with you.'

'But, doctor, you seem to be in excellent spirits.'

'I have had a great piece of good fortune to-day, friend Marck.'

'What, again!' replied Marck, with some vexation in his tone; 'you are the luckiest man I know. Since our childhood I do not remember anything in which you have not succeeded, while I have met with nothing but adversity in my anxious life. Ah! friend Christiaans, I sometimes wish that I were dead.'

'I didn't know that your business was in so bad a state,' said the doctor, surprised. 'Come, tell me all about it; I will help you as far as is in my power.'

'Help me!' there are no means of help!' sighed the cattle-merchant. 'Can you make my eldest daughter who died long ago arise from her grave? Can you bring back my son Jacob, my poor son! who has been carried off to Germany by Napoleon, to find in the first great battle a wretched death?'

'But your son still lives! Let us hope that God will protect him.'

'Ah! they were 100,000 young fellows who left their homes to follow the Emperor in his campaign against Russia. How many will survive of this great multitude? Friend Christiaans, when I think of the fate of my unhappy Jacob I quite lose my senses. I dreamt last night that I had become a magician, and by means of my art I collected together all the tears shed by the mothers of those poor conscripts, and all the blood that had flowed through that cruel monster. It was a terrible place, deep and broad like a sea; and into this I hurled that cruel Corsican, who had taken my son from my arms to sacrifice him to the demon of his ambition.'

'I can feel for your sorrow, friend Jan,' said the doctor: 'but you are wrong to give way to despair. Our last news is good; there are rumours that Napoleon has made overtures of peace to the Emperor of Russia, and there seems great chance of this terrible war being abandoned. In that case all the conscripts would return to their homes at once.'

'Is this true?' said the cattle-dealer, with a gleam of joy in his eyes.

'I saw at Mr. Wouter's a letter from Warsaw, in which it was stated plainly enough. The newspapers tell the same tale.'

'O that it might be so! I should then indeed bless God for His goodness! Yes, friend Christiaans, you little know how wretched it makes a father, to be always dreaming that he sees the body of his son lying maimed and bleeding on a field of battle.'

'I can well feel it,' sighed the doctor.

'But not to the full! adversity has spared you hitherto. Your son Bernard drew on the same day as my Jacob. Bernard drew one of the highest numbers, and remained free from service; Jacob did just the contrary. But that was not all; I gave 5000 francs for a substitute, and then again 7000 francs. Both these fellows ran away from the camp. I was still willing further to tax myself, but I could find no other substitute, so my Jacob has had himself to go to the slaughter. My wife has been ill for three months in consequence, and I have nearly lost my reason. You have never had such trials as these, friend Christiaans.'

'I confess with gratitude to God that I have hitherto been happy,' answered the doctor. 'As concerns my son, it is true that our Bernard drew a high number, but in case of the army meeting with a reverse a fresh levy of 100,000 conscripts would be made at once, and then my son would have to go.'

'That is impossible! they can never raise another levy so soon: and besides, you have money to provide a substitute for your son.'

'But supposing no substitute could be found?'

'For you, doctor, one would certainly be found.'

'Come, come, you are unreasonable, friend Jan. One may have been fortunate for the whole of a long life, and yet a single day may bring with it trouble enough to plunge one in bitterest adversity.'

'Don't tell me, doctor, that you are not favoured by fortune in everything. Your son Bernard is not only free from service, but is also courting the daughter of that millionaire merchant Wouters. You see I have heard about it. If he were not your son I should doubt of his luck, but now I feel sure of his success.'

The doctor shrugged his shoulders and replied, 'There is nothing in it yet, my friend. Perhaps my son has some thought of Miss Wouters, but what does she think of him? and what would M. Wouters say if such an unequal match were proposed to him?'

'We shall see, doctor. When you came in just now, you looked as if some good fortune had happened to you. Some lucky windfall of money, I suppose?'

'No: a very different matter was before my mind. I had been called in all haste to a hamlet beyond Woluwe, to do my best to help a child who was said to be dying. My horse was lame; I ran on foot, as quickly as I could. When arrived I found the child at death's door. He had been gnawing a bone, and a piece of it had stuck in his throat. The terrified parents, bursting into tears, begged me to save the life of the infant. After many efforts I succeeded in getting hold of the bit of bone, and drawing it out of the child's throat. When the parents saw that the evil was overcome, and that they had nothing

more to fear, they fell down on their knees before me, and called down the blessings of Heaven upon my head. Tears of sympathy and joy started to my eyes; yes, of joy, for though I had given no proof of skill, yet I had saved the child from certain death, and as a man and a doctor I felt very happy about this.'

'Every one knows what a kindly heart you have, doctor. I understand your joy in saving the child, but this day's work will bring you great gain. The parents will everywhere praise your skill as a physician, and will also handsomely reward you.'

'They are only poor working people. As poor as they can be. The misery I saw in that cottage excited my deepest pity.'

'And you have left them some token of your generosity?'

'What else could one do, friend Marck? I have no other way in which to thank God than by here and there doing a little good, as far as my small income allows me. Rich people pay me well, the poor I attend out of love; and believe me or not, as you like, every time I am able to help people in distress, either by my art or by a little money, I feel happy, as I do this evening.'

The doctor got up to go. At the door they shook hands, and M. Christiaans repeated once more what good news he had read in the letter from Warsaw, and by encouraging words he tried to raise in his friend's heart the hope of his son's safe return. Marck expressed his gratitude, and left the doctor with a friendly salutation. He lived at Schaerbeek, while M. Christiaans, to reach his home, had to pass through the Namur Gate. To shorten his way, the doctor took a footpath which, with many windings and turnings, crossed a lonely valley. The night was dark; one could only distinguish objects a couple of steps distant as black shadows. The doctor, who was a strong man and knew the road well, walked boldly onward, though rather slowly, for he was thinking of the conversation he had just had with his friend Jan, and all that he had been telling him. Then his thoughts turned more to matters at his own home. If his son should really succeed in winning the hand of Veronica Wouters, then Bernard's fortune would indeed be made; for M. Wouters had only two children. His friend Marck had just told him, that God favoured him in all that he undertook. That his good son should make such a match would indeed be a great joy to him, but he had personal reasons for desiring it as well. He reckoned that Bernard once provided for, he would be able to devote himself more to his profession, and especially to helping the poor. Any time that remained to him he would employ in the cultivation of flowers and foreign plants, in study, and in pleasant intercourse with his friends. The doctor, thus thinking of his plans, had reached the bottom of the valley, where the footpath, running between two high banks, had become very rough and crooked. Suddenly he sprang backward a step, and raised up his walking-stick in self defence. It seemed to him that at some little distance in the dark path a black shadow, like that of some animal, or of a man crouching down, was approaching him. What could it be? Then he heard a strangely hoarse and excited voice, which called out to him,—

'If you value your life, give me all you have about you!'

M. Christiaans, who thought that the robber was about to attack him, lifted up his stout stick, and put himself in an attitude of defence. But the thief still remained standing beyond his reach, and now said to him in an uncertain tone, which had in it a strange mixture of hesitation and resolution,—

'Oh, sir, I beg of you, do not force me to shed your blood! Give me what you have, or otherwise I must kill you!'

The doctor fancied he saw a knife flash in the hand of his assailant, and the thought came into his mind that he had here to do rather with some unfortunate man than with a robber by profession.

'Stand where you are and keep back from me!' he said. 'I will lay down my purse, which contains about thirty francs, here, at the foot of the hedge.'

'No, that is not enough; I must have your watch as well—all you have! Necessity drives me to it. I cannot go back now. Give it up! give it up!'

'My watch belonged to my father,' said the doctor; 'I shall defend it at the risk of my life. Come on then, rascal! and kill if you can the man whom they call the good Doctor of Elsene!'

With uplifted knife the thief had rushed forward, but when he heard the name he took two or three steps backwards, let his knife fall, and cried out with horror,—

'Are you M. Christiaans, the good doctor of Elsene? Oh, what was I about to do? Go on your way, sir; fear no longer. On my knees I implore your forgiveness. Before me you are sacred. If it were to save my life, I would not touch a hair of your head!'

(To be continued.)

WONDERS OF NATURE.

IV.—NATURAL BRIDGES.

THE natural bridge of Virginia is a majestic archway formed in the limestone rock. The stream of Cedar Creek is spanned by one bowed stone roof, groined by the chisel of Nature. The roadway, for there is a good carriage-drive on the bridge, is about 210 feet above the flowing river, and the width from cliff to cliff is some eighty feet.

This Rock Bridge, as it is called by the people who live near it, is situated not far from Harper's Ferry, where the Potomac and the Shenandoah unite their waters in one bed. It is said that some wayfarers have crossed the bridge without being aware that they have been close to one of the wonders of the world. One does not see how this could happen, unless the traveller were dozing, or carried over in a shut-up vehicle like a coach. A man on foot or on horseback must of necessity be aware of his position, though, as he rides or walks over the arch, he will be unable to appreciate the full wonder and beauty of the scene. To do this he must clamber down to the river-bed, and look upwards at the solid mass

hanging over his head in all its impressive majesty. There it stands, a bridge not made with hands; and there it stood, long before man learned how to lay stone on stone and brick on brick; and there it will stand, until the proudest building man has ever reared is tumbled in the dust.

Another natural bridge, in some respects more curious than that of Virginia, is found among the Cordilleras of South America, in the valley of Icononzo. Here we find two bridges, one over the other, uniting the two sides of a huge rent in the mountain, through which a little torrent wears its way. The upper bridge is more than three hundred feet above the stream. It is composed of a mass of rock about forty-seven feet long and forty-one feet wide, so that it makes a good road, which even the most nervous old lady or gentleman might drive or walk across. And it is strong enough, too, for the stone which forms the arch is eight feet in thickness. A protecting rail, very useful in dark and stormy nights, has been set up on the sides of the upper bridge. This is made of cane, and looks rather slight to be a rampart of safety at that giddy height.

Twenty yards below the first bridge is the other bridge. This is formed of three enormous masses of rock, which seem to have fallen by chance into their present positions. The middle block acts as the key-stone of the arch. About half-way across this lower bridge is a fearful hole, through which you can see the dim abyss that yawns beneath your feet. You can hear the tinkle of the far-off mountain stream, as it sings its quiet tune; but you can hardly see it, unless you light a torch and lower it down. The place is chosen as a congenial home by many birds of night, whose melancholy notes mingle with the sound of the plashing waters. Beside these natural bridges, there are others of a similar kind in other parts of the world; but these two, in North and South America, are reckoned the most remarkable.

In many similar spots, where Nature has not placed a bridge, men have contrived to do so, and these arches, thus flung at great hazard over awful clefts, are often called devil's bridges, because people in old times supposed that those who dared thus to build were assisted by the evil one. There are many such in mountainous districts: in the Alps, Apennines, and Pyrenees; and one in Wales, which is thrown over a deep chasm in rocks, through which a little stream flows.

This devil's bridge is like that natural bridge at Icononzo, in having two arches, the one above the other. A good carriage-road runs on the upper arch. This bridge was erected by some ingenious architect in the twelfth century, and the expense of its erection was defrayed by the good monks of Star-flower Abbey. The dwellers in monasteries were very forward in the construction of roads and bridges. It was their great aim to secure as many pilgrims as possible to the shrines they guarded. Pilgrims never came without making offerings, and they were therefore welcome: and the roads and bridges on the way to the monasteries were diligently mended and made safe.

It has been thought that the first architects of bridges may have taken their idea from natural works, similar to the two bridges already described; or from bridges formed by the fall of trees across small brooks. We read very much of fords in the Bible, but there is no mention of a bridge in the whole of the sacred volume.

When rivers are rapid, bridges of boats are sometimes employed; as at St. Petersburg, and over the Po in Italy.

The oldest bridge in England is thought to be a curious triangular bridge at Croyland, in Lincolnshire. It was built about the year 860. The longest bridge in England is probably one over the Trent, in Derbyshire, which is 1545 feet long, and has thirty-four arches, to carry the road over meadows which are flooded in winter. It is exceeded only, we believe, in Europe, by one at Lyons over the Rhone, which is 1700 feet long, and one over the Garonne at Bordeaux, which is 1593 feet in length. G. S. O.

AN EMIGRATION STORY.

(*Concluded from page* 139.)

CHAPTER V.

BUT while the gold-fields were drawing away sailors from their ships and shopmen from their shops, agricultural labourers, trained to the use of the shovel, were not likely to stay behind. And so Jack and Harry found they had 'all the world before them where to choose,' as regarded the rest of the colony, which was almost at a standstill for want of workmen.

They closed with the first offer that was made to them—a few days in Melbourne having swallowed up all their money—and took situations as shepherds, and to make themselves generally useful, on a station about thirty miles inland. They had high wages, and plenty of mutton, damper, and tea; but they found their new life very dull and solitary. There was no working together on those vast tracts of land, where workmen were so scarce. Harry spent weeks and weeks in the bush alone, driving flocks of sheep from place to place, with nothing but a compass and the sun to guide him through the trackless gum-tree forest; and he lived for months in a little hut in a mountain-gully, all by himself, so far away from everybody that he only had his rations brought to him once a-week, and hardly ever saw the face of a white man. Now and then some stragglers from an aboriginal tribe discovered him in his solitude, but in those days their room was very much to be preferred to their company. The wild dogs would hover round his flocks at night, howling dismally; herds of kangaroos would come grazing past his door, and take a few hops and stare at him while he levelled his gun—as if they were willing to present him with a tail to make soup with; and flocks of emus would stalk about amongst the trees, making that curious hollow, rumbling noise of theirs, before they fled away at sight of him. These—though they are never seen in that district nowadays—were his familiar visitors, and almost his only ones.

To a lad of his age and temperament, such an

Natural Bridge, Virginia.

existence was a very wretched one. How often, when drinking his evening pannikin of tea, and watching his damper as it browned in the embers of his solitary fire—or when rolling himself in his blanket on the rude stretcher, which was bed, sofa, and chair in one, while the rain rattled on the bark roof of the hut, or the opossums scampered over it—did he think of the chimney-corner in his mother's cottage, and longed to be back there again! But it was not so easy to go back as it had been to come away. For some time, at all events, he knew he had no choice but to make the best of things as they were. He cared more for his mother now than he had ever done in his life, and his whole mind was engrossed with the desire to make what compensation he could for his rash and undutiful desertion.

Of course his first thought was to scrape his earnings together, and send them home, which he did in two instalments; but, to his great surprise and grief, he never had any acknowledgment of either remittance from her. He heard once, through an English letter of Jack Henderson's, that she was continuing her laundry-work for the ladies of the village, which showed him she was alive and well; and he concluded then that he had offended her too deeply for pardon.

As it happened, she had received the money and his penitent and hopeful letters, both by the same post; and she had duly replied to them by the first outgoing mail, forgiving him for what he had done, and proposing that (if he was doing well) he should send home what he could spare towards paying her passage out to him. But, owing to some accident or negligence, such as was common in that time of excitement and disorder, her letter never reached him.

He used to wonder at her silence, and guess all sorts of reasons for it but the right one.

'At any rate,' he said to himself from time to time, 'whether she's given me up or not, I mustn't go home till I've something handsome to show.'

So he went on earning and saving, until two years were gone. And then he and Jack, by paying a certain moderate sum to the Government, got permission to go to the gold-fields.

CHAPTER VI.

The moon was rising one summer evening on a scene which was familiar enough to Australian settlers, but was nevertheless weird and strange.

In a long, wild-looking gully, overhung with ranges, whose peaks were still rosy with the glow of the departed sun, wound a small river, which had once been as clear as a Yorkshire trout-stream, but was now of the colour of rich peasoup. On either side of it (until a passing swagman happened to put a few stones together, to shelter his camp-fire from the wind, one day, and chanced to see some yellow particles sticking about them), all had once been peaceful greensward, covered in the spring-time with the loveliest orchids and purple sarsaparilla; but was now like an exposed ant-hill on a large scale. Sandy holes and heaps honeycombed the ground for miles, interspersed with hundreds of diggers' cradles and homely contrivances of machinery—the pick and spade sticking up from the shallower excavations here and there, where they had just been left for the night. Bordering these claims—more under the shelter of the ranges—were innumerable tents of all sorts and shapes, and two long rows of camp-fires, from which ascended an aroma of mutton-chops which filled the whole valley. The diggers were resting from their labours, and enjoying their evening meal.

A little apart from the rest, Harry Helmore and Jack Henderson were sitting side by side on the grass, each with a great wedge of damper and a slice of fried mutton, held sandwich fashion, in his hand, with a smoking billy of tea between them, into which they dipped their pannikins from time to time.

'It's thirsty work!' exclaimed Jack, as he stirred some coarse sugar into his little tin vessel with his greasy knife. 'But never mind—our luck has turned now, Harry.'

'Yes,' said Harry, with his mouth full; 'and it's more than I ever expected. I can tell you I was pretty nearly ready to give up. It seemed as if I wasn't to prosper. I thought it was a punishment, you know.'

'Well, it was rather hard to be prospecting for two or three months, and then, when we did get a hole that had anything in it, not to wash up so much as an ounce in the week; while those fellows'—pointing over his shoulders to a party seated by the adjoining fire—'had their pans half full every night.'

'And food so precious dear!' added Harry.

'Yes; we should have been pretty well cleaned out in another day or two. However, our luck has turned now. We shall soon have our pockets full.'

'And then I shall make off home, Jack.'

'That would be a pity, just when things are looking up.'

'Yes; but I couldn't stand it much longer. And perhaps mother will agree to my coming back, or to coming with me. That's my idea, but I shall leave her to settle it next time. It's a comfort I shall have something to take home to her, after all. Cut me a bit more damper, Jack. Flour is running low, isn't it?' Ah, well, we can lay in stores now.'

What had happened to them that day was this.

They unrolled themselves from their blankets, as usual, before the sun had risen, and ate their breakfast, feeling anything but hopeful as to their prospects of getting rich by gold-finding, seeing they had been hard at work for months, and yet were now running short of provisions, and had but a five-pound note between them. However, when the shovels and cradles were all going again, filling the gully with clatter and noise, they went to their claim, and toiled there as busily as usual, one digging, and the other carrying the bucket of 'stuff' to the cradle, turn and turn about. And at noon, when the whole community knocked off work for an hour to cook and eat, the lads told one another they had seen bright specks in the bottom of their cradle, which they had never done before, and that they really thought they had found something worth having at last.

So they cheered up and put on a great spurt, and worked the whole afternoon with hardly a moment's pause. And then, when the sun began to sink behind the hills, they hastened to their pan-washing, and found, when all the dirt had been run off, that they had a pan half full of gold.

They could scarcely believe it at first; and they passed the leather-bag (into which they put it until they could convey it to the bank-tent) from one to the other, to feel its weight and speculate as to its value, with the amazed delight of children.

However, they bethought themselves that it would be wisest not to draw the attention of their neighbours to this change of fortune, and it was also time to prepare their supper. So here they sat on the grass, with their mutton and damper, and their steaming pannikins of tea, indulging in dreams of the brighter future which they thought they saw before them.

By-and-by the full moon rose to the brow of the ranges, contrasting strangely with the red camp-fires burning in the summer darkness of the valley. The diggers were singing here, dancing there, drinking elsewhere, and flutes and banjos were heard piping and twanging at intervals above the roar of noisy voices. Harry and Jack sat apart at their tent-door, guarding their treasure, and whispering of their plans—Jack kneading fresh damper for the morrow from flour which Harry had fetched from a neighbouring store—until these sounds all gradually died away, and nothing was heard but the melancholy note of some distant curlews and the howl of a wild dog.

CHAPTER VII.

When Harry Helmore came back to his native village, it was winter-time and night. The snow was falling thickly, and lying smooth and white on the roofs and roads and the flat fen-fields; and it struck him that the aspect of the familiar scene was sad and desolate.

Nobody knew of his return. He had laid his plans so as to surprise his mother, intending, by cutting across certain farm-lands from the nearest railway station, to enter the village without being noticed, to knock at her door, and, on her opening it, to throw himself into her arms and tell her he had come back to make her rich and happy for the rest of her life. But when he had nearly carried out his little programme he began to be assailed with nervous anxieties. Supposing she should meet him with reproaches? Supposing she should not be at home? Supposing she should have left the village altogether? After all, he told himself, it was a stupid plan to come sneaking home in that way; and he wished he had written to prepare her.

As he turned the corner of the lane in which the old home stood, his heart throbbed fast with mingled hope and dread. 'All right,' he said to himself thankfully, as in the pale moonlight he saw the smoke curling up from the chimney, and ruddy firelight shining through the lattice-window upon the patch of garden and little white gate. 'There she is! hard at work at the ironing-board, I'll be bound! How surprised she'll be! She's not a nervous one, that's a comfort.'

He opened and shut the gate softly, holding his breath, and paused to listen for the measured tap and sweep of the iron over the board, which was once such a familiar sound. Instead of this, he heard several women's voices talking, the cry of a baby, and a clatter on the floor as if a cradle were being rocked violently to and fro.

'Why, she's got company!' he said to himself, in a very crestfallen tone. 'That will spoil it all! I never counted on not finding her alone.'

However, he tapped at the door. There was an immediate lull in the conversation, a rustling of petticoats, and then it was opened—not by Mrs. Helmore, but by Mrs. Perry, the baker's wife.

She did not recognise him, but he knew her at once, and, without speaking, looked over her shoulder into the room. It was shabby, dirty, crowded with children and broken furniture; and old Mrs. Brown and the village nurse sat by the fireside.

'Where's my mother?' he asked eagerly, pushing into the house; and at the sound of his voice the three women broke into a cry.

'It's Harry!—it's Harry Helmore!—it's Harry come back at last!' exclaimed Mrs. Perry. 'Oh, you naughty, undutiful boy! why did you go away and break your poor mother's heart?'

'Hush, hush!' said old Mrs. Brown, tottering from her arm-chair; 'don't talk to the poor lad so! Come in, Harry—come in. We're glad to see you, my dear. Only it's a sad pity you didn't come before.'

'Why, what's the matter?' gasped Harry piteously, staring from one to another, and as pale as death.

'O my dear, the fever was going about, and she was not so strong as she used to be, what with fretting and one thing and other, and she took it,—and—and——'

The old woman broke down and began to cry, and sharp-tongued Mrs. Perry finished her speech for her:—

'And so she just went off, Harry Helmore, after she'd been ten days took. And fever or no fever, if ever a poor soul died of a broken heart that poor soul did—and I'd say it if it was my last breath. Yes, if you ask where's your mother, I'll tell you—under the north wall of the church, just between the big buttress and the yew-tree.'

* * * *

Harry Helmore is a middle-aged man now, and has children of his own. And they often wonder what makes him seem more grave and sad than other fathers when they are wilful or disobedient, and wonder at the unfailing interest and patience with which he hears and enters into all their joys and troubles, and all their hopes and plans.

VEGETABLE INSTINCT.

If a pail of water be placed within six inches of either side of the stem of a pumpkin or vegetable marrow, it will in the course of the night approach it, and will be found in the morning with one of the leaves on the water. If a prop be placed within six inches of a young convolvulus, or scarlet-runner, it will find it, although the prop may be shifted daily. If after it has twined some distance up the prop it be unwound, and twined in the opposite direction, it will return to its original position, or die in the attempt; yet, notwithstanding, if two of the plants grow near to each other, and have no stake around which they can entwine, one of them will alter the direction of the spiral, and they will twine round each other.

Harry's return to his native village.

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Chatterbox.

The Wild Cat.

THE WILD CAT.

THE Cat is a small member of that very important family—the feline—which embraces those carnivorous animals in whom the organs of destruction are most highly developed, viz. lions, tigers, leopards, and lynxes. The rank which this family holds among quadrupeds corresponds with the rank held by the *falconidæ* among birds.

There is a considerable difference of opinion among naturalists as to the connexion between the wild cat of the woods and mountains, and the domestic pussy of our homes. The two animals vary a good deal in the structure of their bodies, and especially in one feature—the tail. Examine the cat which basks before your fire. Her tail tapers to a fine point. Not so the wild cat's tail. It is quite as large at the very end as it is at the base, and that end is always black. It is possible to lay too much stress upon this difference as a reason for separating the common cat and the wild cat into different groups. For look at the wondrous variety of tail in the dog family. There is the greyhound, 'tailed like the rat,' and by his side there is the spaniel, with an appendage like a great feather. The dogs are related—they are all DOG. Why are not the cats all CAT? Why should a thick bushy tail sow discord among brethren?

Wild cats were once esteemed as game, and protected accordingly; not for the sake of their flesh, but their skins. Did not my Lord Abbot of Medeshamstede, now called Peterborough, get permission from our sovereign Richard the Second to hunt the wild cat? Whether the Churchman bent the yew-bow himself, or merely went forth on his mule to see the sport in the forest glades, we know not. And did not nuns in those days array themslves in cats' skins? Was it not ordained in certain canons that cat's skin or lamb's skin should be the trimming even of a lady abbess's attire?

One thing seems to favour the view that wild cats and tame cats are not the same, viz. the exceeding scarceness of a good mouser in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Howel the Good, a most excellent Prince of Wales, had a high regard for the cat. He loved to hear the soft familiar purr. His granary was guarded by puss. If any Welshman dared to carry off the royal cat, he was made to pay for his misdemeanour properly. The cat was held by the tip of its tail (it was dead, we trust, or woe to the holder!), and its head was made just to touch the floor. Then the unfortunate Taffy had to pour his own corn over the cat until it became a pyramid of grain, and covered the tip of the tail. Or if he had no corn, but kept sheep, he might make amends for his outrage on Howel's cat by giving an ewe, its fleece, and its lamb. Are you mathematician enough to calculate the quantity of corn that would bury a cat in that singular manner?

You may measure your own cat if she will let you. The average size of a wild cat (male) is, from head to tip of tail, two feet nine inches.

It is now seldom found in England, except in some woods in the north. It chooses when it can the most unfrequented mountainous woods, where in hollow trees, or clefts of the rocks, it lives a life after its own wild fashion. It is a fierce and powerful creature, not pleasant to meet, especially when irritated.

Wild cats are found both in Europe and Asia, chiefly in the wooded districts of the northern parts, where they grow to a larger size, and have longer fur, than their cousins in Spain and Italy: thus showing that cold and damp promote growth in certain constitutions, whilst warmth and dryness do so in others. G. S. O.

GRANDFATHER IN ENGLAND.

GRANDFATHER in England was very rich. That we all knew. And now father was dead, and Sophy and I and our stepmother had nothing to live upon, mother suggested that we should all go to England and throw ourselves on his mercy. Uncle George thought it a good idea. He was my stepmother's brother, and used to lie on the sofa all day; and when she got angry with him—which she did pretty often—and asked him what he was good for, he used to smile, and say, 'Good to look at, my dear Lauretta; which you never will be if you put on such a savage face as that.'

Uncle George was goodnatured to Sophy and me, and I rather liked him, though I could not but remember that father used to shake his head over him and say he would come to no good.

Poor father! I did not know much about him, though I was fourteen when he died. He had offended grandfather long ago so sorely that he was never forgiven, and I think this made him miserable all his life. He let us children do pretty much as we liked, and was only particular about one thing—that we should speak the truth.

How he came to marry Miss Lauretta Spiker when Sophy was six years old I could not imagine, for she often did not tell the truth, I know, and must have been the exact opposite of our own mother. But this is not what I am writing about now, so I must go on to grandfather.

We sailed from Australia—mother, Uncle George, Sophy, and I. There was a great deal of whispering and arranging to be done first, and among the changes made I was told not to call Uncle George 'uncle' any more, but simply 'George.'

It seemed odd, as he was a big man with whiskers; but mother insisted, so I laughed and tried to do it.

Grandfather did seem rich when we reached his big house in Manchester, with all the servants marching about it. He appeared surprised at our arrival; but he took us all in, and we had beautiful rooms, and soft beds, and a grand dinner. Next day he sent a note requesting Mrs. Maurice Lang and his son's children to give him an interview in his library.

So in we all went, uncle—I mean George—too. Mother sat down by grandfather, with her arm round Sophy, who struggled to get away to me. She liked 'sister' best, for mother was not fond of children.

Grandfather had a stiff, stern face; but his eyes were like father's, and almost made me cry.

He was very polite, and asked Mrs. Maurice Lang her plans. She wiped her eyes and answered that Maurice had bade her bring his children to their grandfather after his death, as their fit protector, conjointly with herself.

'And this gentleman,' asked grandfather, pointing to Uncle George, 'am I also to protect him?'

'Ah, George,' said my stepmother, nervously: 'it may seem premature; but—but her father he wished it. She is young yet—Lilian—but they are already betrothed by his dying hand.'

I had read a few novels, for I was turned fifteen, and I knew what betrothal meant; but the idea of applying such a term to the footing on which Uncle George and I stood so amazed me that a great 'Oh!' escaped me; and, besides, it was all so utterly untrue.

'Quiet, Lilian, please,' said my grandfather, calmly, noticing my start and cry. 'I have more to say. Of course, as you declare, I am the fit protector of my son's children; but are you, Mrs. Maurice Lang, and you, Mr. George—ah, Spiker!—willing to cast in your lot with a poor old man and share his fortunes, his joys, and his sorrows?'

Mother was just going to protest for herself and Uncle George, when grandfather waved his hand for silence again.

'Stay once more, and pardon the interruption,' he added; 'perhaps I owe it to you to state the position in which you find me—a little different, perhaps, to what you imagined when you sailed from Australia. I am a ruined man.'

Mother started, and Uncle George jumped up.

'A ruined man,' pursued grandfather, 'the victim of a sixteen years' course of fraud. Had my boy,' he said, his voice failing a little, 'not dreaded to confess to me a slight deviation from the path of right, I might years ago have discovered that my head clerk, and not my son, had committed the forgery on my bank which led to his flight to Australia. This morning it has all been made plain to me, with the announcement of further heavy losses; and you, madam—you, sir—and my young grandchildren, seek refuge with a penniless man.'

I don't quite remember what happened after this. I think mother cried again, and I know Uncle George was soon missing from the room, while in the confusion grandfather kissed me, and took Sophy on his knee.

'Will you stay with a poor old man, Lilian?' he asked me.

'I will stay with my grandfather always, poor or rich,' I said, stoutly.

'Till you are Mrs. George Spiker?' said grandfather, with a touch of amusement in his voice.

'I shall never be that,' I said; 'she ought not to have said it—it wasn't true!'

'I never believed it,' said grandfather.

My stepmother went back to Australia with Uncle George, and I have never seen them again.

Sophy and I live with grandfather, and are very happy. He is poor now compared to what he used to be; but he is not quite ruined, since two or three good friends have come forward to set him on his feet again, as they say. He has such a character for honesty that no one could bear to see him ruined by that wicked, forging clerk.

We sometimes talk of our father, and grandfather tells me that it was through his shrinking from speaking openly on a little matter of business that all his troubles and estrangement arose.

'Be open and truthful, my little girls, and I ask nothing else,' he often said, as we talked of the sad old times. H. A. F.

THE TWO OLD FRIENDS.

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

(*Continued from page* 147.)

CLASPING his hands the man sank down on his knees beside the path. All this had happened so quickly that Christiaans asked himself whether he was awake or dreaming. He felt sure that the pretended murderer must be the victim of some great adversity, for his voice, which had now sunk into a tone of deep supplication, was evidently that of quite a young man. Urged by a feeling of compassion the doctor went up to his assailant, who had now got up again, and with his head in his hands was leaning against the high bank. The doctor took his hand as if he wished to feel his pulse, and then said kindly,—

'You are unfortunate, are you not?'

'Terribly unfortunate!' he sighed.

'You are in a fever—a hot fever.'

'My head burns as if it were on fire; everything is turning before my eyes. Ah! good Doctor Christiaans, how often as a child have I blessed your name in my prayers, sir! And I was about to stain my hands with your blood!'

Now he began to sob and weep.

'Do you know me, then?' the doctor asked. 'Have I ever done you any kindness?'

'You saved my mother's life, sir!'

'What is your name?'

'Your question makes me shudder. My name! If I told you my name I should sacrifice my mother's life!'

'But you love your mother deeply, do you not?'

'God reads my heart, He knows it well,' repeated the young man, in a tone which would have moved less feeling hearts than that of the doctor.

'How is this possible?' replied M. Christiaans. You love your mother, and yet you could——'

'Out of love to her, sir!'

'Become a thief and a murderer?'

'It is her honour, her life, that I wished to defend!'

'I don't understand you,' exclaimed the doctor: 'unless you are really out of your mind, how can I explain your strange words?'

'Yes, I was mad,' replied the young man. 'Now the storm in my soul is stilled, but it may come back again: and then, alas——!'

'And then?'

Our visit to Grandfather in England.

"What is your wish, my friend?" [Page 158.

'Nothing remains for me but to die.

'If I do not mistake, your misfortune can be helped with money,' said the doctor, in a kindly tone. 'Come with me to my house; tell me what makes you so wretched; and if I find that you are worthy of my assistance, I will do all I can to save you.'

The doctor took the young man's hand as he was about to go on before him in the path, but he withdrew it with a shudder, and exclaimed in terror,—

'Follow you to your home? Show my face in the light? Oh, I could not! I cannot!'

'Do you fear, then, that I shall betray you?'

'No; but never, never could I go with you. Let me go, sir. Be generous and merciful; never speak, I implore you, of what has just happened here. Leave me to my fate, and may God bless you. You saved my mother, you have saved too her unhappy son; for now, at all events, I shall not appear

before the Supreme Judge stained with human blood. Farewell! farewell!'

And he hurried off along the road to Etterbeek. But the doctor ran after him, and held him back.

'You are grateful to me,' he said; 'you assure me that I have saved your mother's life. Well, now, do me a service in return.'

'What can a wretch in my position do?' sobbed the youth.

'It is quite in your power to do what I shall request of you.'

'If it is so, sir, speak, even if you demand my blood to the last drop.'

'Listen,' said the doctor. 'I shall not say a word to any one, not even to my wife, about our meeting here in this path. You must promise me that, until noon to-morrow, you will do no injury to yourself nor others. Well, now?'

'Till to-morrow at noon!' he repeated, reflecting. 'To-morrow is the last day!'

'Now I pray you promise it to me faithfully.'

'It shall be so, sir; I will live till to-morrow at noon: but what service can I show you thereby?'

'I require nothing else of you than this one promise, and I add to it that I shall expect you at my house early to-morrow morning, about six o'clock, to hear from you how you are then, and to help you to save yourself if it is possible. Will you come?'

'No, sir, I will not come—I may not come—I must submit to my fate—nothing can hinder it.'

'However, I shall expect you: think over it, and become more reasonable. Till to-morrow, then—till to-morrow!'

'Farewell for ever!' replied the young man, in a voice which seemed choked by tears.

'Do not forget that your coming will make him who saved your mother's life happy,' the doctor called after him.

Then they separated, going in contrary directions.

CHAPTER II.

Next morning the doctor got up earlier than usual. The thought of the strange meeting of the previous evening had disturbed his sleep. He had racked his brains to try and remember what woman, poor or rich, he had saved from a certain death, that he might find in her the mother of his assailant; but in his long career he had helped so many to recovery that he could not solve the puzzle. Now he sat in his study with his head resting on his hand, asking himself whether the man who had stood with the knife in his hand ready to murder him would venture to appear in his presence. Would he come at the appointed hour? He thought that probably he would not come, for, if fear of being recognised had prevented the guilty youth from following the doctor last night, how would he dare to show himself in broad daylight?

This reflection grieved M. Christiaans. Not only was he curious to know who his assailant was, but he felt sure that the man must be a victim of some great misfortune, and that with a little help and good advice he might be led back from the road of sin into the path of virtue. The good-hearted doctor rejoiced every time he was able to restore health of body to a sick man, but how much happier would he count himself if this day it should be granted to him to save a poor sick soul from ruin! Deep in such thoughts, the doctor had forgotten that the appointed hour was approaching. But the striking of the clock reminded him.

'Six o'clock!' he exclaimed. 'No, he will not come!'

M. Christiaans got up and went to the window, and looked through the blinds in such a way that he could see himself into the street, without being seen himself from without. Here he gazed in both directions at the people who were going by. They were mostly villagers bringing their stock of vegetables or milk to the town, or labourers going to their work. Each time he saw a young man approaching he thought he might stop at his door, but he was several times disappointed in his hopes. At last he was just about to leave the window, murmuring with some vexation,—

'It is now long past six. No, he will not come!'

But just then he noticed in the street a young man whose appearance struck him at once.

'Ah! perhaps that is he!' he said.

This young man wore clothes which had been fashionable, but which now looked shabby and threadbare. At first the doctor could not see his face, for he kept his head sunk upon his breast, as he walked slowly along. When he approached M. Christiaans' house he raised his head, and then the doctor saw his face. He began to doubt again now, for although the youth was pale, and bore in his sunken eyes the marks of pain, illness, and trouble, his features bore so sweet and noble an expression that it seemed impossible he could be guilty of any heinous crime. The doctor's first suspicions must indeed be groundless, for the youth, after raising his looks to the house hastened his steps and went on his way. Then M. Christiaans gave up all expectation and returned to the table. He took out a note-book and began to arrange for the visits he had to make that day to his patients; now and then he would stop to think again about his assailant of last night, but he was now quite sure that he would not come, as the appointed hour had long ago passed. Then he heard the house-bell ring. He started; but he smiled at his own excitement, and said to himself that this was doubtless the visit of some sick person, of which he had many every day. The study-door was opened by the maid and shut again. The young man with the shabby clothes stood in the room, silent, trembling, pale, with his eyes on the ground. Not feeling quite sure whether this was his assailant of the previous evening, the doctor did not like to ask him straight out.

'What is your wish, my friend?' he inquired.

'Oh, forgiveness! Last night! that dreadful night!' he sighed, in scarcely audible words.

'Last night?' repeated the doctor. 'Ah, you have come, then! Sit down, here is a chair!'

As if he found it difficult to stand upright any longer, the young man put his trembling hand on the back of the chair and was about to sit down, but his legs gave away beneath him, and he sank down almost fainting on the seat, while his cheeks became livid and his eyes closed. Running to him, the doctor felt his pulse and asked,—

'What is the matter? Do you feel ill?'

'Hunger! I am dying with hunger!' stammered the youth: but when he saw that the doctor was about to take a bell from the table to ring for the maid, he raised up his hands imploringly.

'I understand you,' replied M. Christiaans: 'don't be afraid, I will go myself and be back quickly.'

And he left the room. And in a few moments after he returned with a bottle and a loaf. He poured out a glass of wine, and held it to the lad's lips, and then handed him a slice of bread, as he said to him,—

'Be silent now; first eat a mouthful and then we can talk. Do not fear that any one can overhear or surprise us; I have ordered the maid to admit no one to me as long as you are here. If possible, I will comfort and help you. To reward me, you must be open and candid with me. How you seem to enjoy the bread! Is it long since you have had any food?'

'For three days and three nights I have eaten nothing but herbs, roots, and the bark of trees,' replied the youth.

'How do you feel now?' the doctor asked after a few minutes.

'Quite refreshed and strengthened, sir. I thank you for your kindness; still I do not know whether death by hunger would not have been better for me. Then I should have been released from my terrible fate, and God would not have to charge me with my own death.'

'Your own death!' repeated the doctor. 'If I understood you rightly, want of money has driven you to think of committing such crimes? If I were to give you money——?'

'Impossible! impossible!' sobbed the young man, as he let his head fall on his breast.

'We will see about that. Now begin to explain all this to me: tell me especially under what circumstances I was able to save your mother's life.'

After passing his hand over his forehead, as if to still its throbbing, the young man began.

(To be continued.)

IMPRISONED IN A COAL-PIT.

ON Wednesday, September 13, 1769, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, one Mr. George Spearing fell down a disused coal-pit, which was only imperfectly covered over in a hazel wood in the neighbourhood of Glasgow.

The pit was seventeen yards deep, so the poor fellow on recovering from the stun consequent on his fall was relieved to discover that none of his limbs were injured, though he was much bruised. Little did he think that he would remain seven nights in this dreary pit, without food or shelter from the rain which fell almost incessantly.

But the story, though curtailed, had best be told as nearly as possible in his own words. 'The pit,' said he, in his narrative of his sufferings, 'was about 5 feet in diameter, and not having been worked for years, the galleries branching from it were choked up and I had no place of shelter from the rain, so I was soon completely wet through. It was almost impossible to sleep in this state, particularly as my only pillow was a forked stick which I placed against the sides of the pit, forming thus a support for my head or my body. I do not think I ever slept an hour together, and the first night passed very slowly.

'In the morning, however, a robin perched directly over the mouth of the pit, and sang so sweetly that I was much cheered. This little warbler continued to visit my quarters every morning during my confinement, and I sincerely believe the trust I had in Providence and the company of this little bird contributed much to that serenity of mind which I enjoyed to the last.

'Not a hundred yards from the pit was a water-mill. I could hear human voices there, and the sound of horses' feet, and the cackling of hens and ducks, but call as loudly as I would I failed to make myself heard by these neighbours.

'I suffered little from hunger but much from thirst, and though I sucked my clothes to quench it, I could by no means obtain a sufficient supply of water till I happily discovered the thigh-bone of a bull, which I afterwards heard had fallen into the pit about eighteen years before, and in a cavity of this I managed to collect nearly a quart of rain-water. The bottom of the pit harboured many toads, frogs, and snails; these creatures would crawl about me, and often when I slept I would find them crawled into my neck. The toads I destroyed, but the frogs I kept, since I did not know but there might be a necessity for eating them.

'On Saturday I heard the voices of boys in the wood, and called to them; but they went away taking no notice of me. I afterwards learned that they had heard me, but fearing some idle tale of a wild man in the woods they ran away affrighted. Sunday was my birthday. Next day some friends of mine sent men out specially to search the pit for me. These men visited the mill to inquire concerning me, but in consequence of the very great rain they came no further, and cruelly went home telling their employers they had searched the pit and I was not to be found.

'Many people in my dismal case would now have died of despair, but I thank God I still enjoyed perfect serenity of mind; so much so, that on the Tuesday afternoon, when I had been six nights in the pit, I very composedly, by way of amusement, combed my wig on my knee, humming a tune.

'At length September 20th came, the happy morning of my deliverance. Through the brambles and bushes that covered the mouth of the pit I could see the sun shining and hear my pretty warbler singing his melodious strain, when my attention was roused by the confused noise of human voices, which seemed to be approaching the pit; immediately I called out, and agreeably surprised some of my acquaintances who were in search of me. As soon as they heard my voice they all ran to the pit, exclaiming, "He is alive!" I was asked how long I had been in my prison, and I produced my handkerchief, on which I had tied seven knots, one each morning, to mark the time.'

Here ends the narrative of Mr. Spearing's week of solitary confinement; what he suffered afterwards in his poor cramped limbs it is needless to narrate; suffice it to say, that he completely recovered his health, and lived to tell the tale of his remarkable adventure to his nine children.

H. A. F.

Imprisoned in a Coal-pit.

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Chatterbox.

William telling his mother the good news.

THE TWO OLD FRIENDS.

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

(*Continued from page* 159.)

'MY name is William Hoofs. I live at Elsene. My father was foreman to a paper-hanger. He was devoted to me, his only child. His dream was, to make a pattern workman out of me. Therefore he endeavoured from my childhood to teach me all that he knew of his trade. Afterwards I was not only to go to school, but also to the Academy of Fine Arts. Unfortunately, when I was seven years old, my father fell into a rapid consumption. My mother watched day and night by his bedside. His illness lasted several months. In order to provide for the daily expenses of the household, and to pay the doctor, she nearly worked her eyes out of her head. Her occupation was to make silk fringes for curtains, and she could thereby earn a good deal of money. But during my father's long illness it did not suffice for us, and a few weeks before his death we had sold and pawned almost everything we possessed—furniture, clothes, bedding; except a gold watch, which went down in our family as an heirloom from father to son. Scarcely had I accompanied my dear father to his last resting-place when my poor mother, worn out by her anxious cares and bitter sorrow, also sank down upon a sick bed. Happily, being a child, I did not know the signs of death, or I should have given way altogether beneath so much sorrow and misery. A neighbour's wife, who nursed my mother out of love, often said that no one could cure her except the good doctor of Elsene; but we had nothing wherewith to pay a doctor, and had it not been that the baker and the grocer still gave us credit out of pity we must have died of hunger.

'My mother, who thought of my future with dismay, at last determined to sacrifice my father's gold watch in order to pay the doctor. M. Christiaans was summoned to come the same day. By his kind words he encouraged in my mother the hope of recovery. He noticed the misery in our house, and he guessed that we could not buy what was necessary to restore the strength of the sick woman. Henceforth, a messenger came to us each day from the doctor, bringing us some kind of strengthening food. When my mother expressed her fear that she would never have enough money to pay for all these things, the good doctor said smiling, "Get well first, my good woman, then afterwards we can talk about that." Do you remember it, sir?'

The doctor shook his head.

'You do not? you forget your own good deeds?' exclaimed the youth in surprise. 'But God will not forget them!'

'I have helped several persons in distressing circumstances. And your mother recovered?'

'Yes, sir. You came once, while my mother was already sitting up, and she asked you if she might work again a little at her silk fringes. You felt her pulse, and exclaimed, "All right, good woman! the illness is overcome; you are cured!" My mother fell down on her knees before you, and I beside her: and we blessed you, as the angel who had come to deliver us from our misery. Forgive me, sir; the recollection of your good deeds, the remembrance of that time of sorrow, but of innocence, so deeply overcomes me, that I can scarcely speak any longer.'

The doctor said nothing; the young man's words touched his heart deeply, and he silently thanked God for permitting him thus, here and there in his life, to do some good actions.

'That was not all,' continued the youth, after awhile; 'my mother told all her trouble to the doctor, and how she was unable at present to pay him for his kindness and care. But she still possessed, she said, an object of some value. With these words she offered him my father's gold watch. What did he do? He said she owed him nothing; he returned the watch at once, and put a gold Napoleon into my mother's hand, to help her on till she could work again as usual. You went away, sir, and since then you have never entered our village; but in that house, from which, as a messenger from Heaven, you banished death and hunger, a mother always taught her child to mention the name of their benefactor in his prayers.'

'Yes, yes, I now remember all about the watch and the good woman with her youngster,' the doctor said. 'And you are that boy?—you, who last night held a knife at my breast?'

The youth bent his head still lower. 'Pardon,' he implored. 'I was mad—I did not know what I was doing!'

'But what could have driven you to such a crime?' asked the doctor. 'Tell me without reserve; convince me that through some misfortune, and not through your own fault or your own will, you were driven to the verge of this crime, and it may be that he who saved the mother will be able to save the son.'

'I am more grateful to you than I can express,' replied the youth, with a sigh; 'but I cannot hope for any way of escape.'

'Now let us hear about it. A misfortune—a great misfortune, has come upon you: tell me?'

'I shall try to be as short as possible, sir.'

'No, no. I want to know all the circumstances of the case. I take deep interest in it. Speak now, and do not fear to be too long.'

'Be it so,' answered the young man. 'I will resume then the story of my humble life where I just left off. My good mother was restored to health. By working night and day, and often denying herself necessary food, she succeeded in doing what was the favourite dream of my late father: she sent me to the school, and afterwards to the Academy of Arts.

'Before my education was completed there my mother's eyes became gradually weaker so that she was obliged to give up much of her daily work, or she would have lost her sight altogether. It then became my turn to take the burden of our maintenance upon my own shoulders. I left the Academy, and tried to earn money as well as I could. At first we suffered from poverty, then from hunger, but our love to each other was a source of encouragement and comfort to us.

'I have now reached the age of twenty-three. I am clerk to a surveyor and architect in Brussels; my salary is small, but we live in a frugal way. For a whole year I have never put my foot inside a public-house or place of amusement. When I am not at my office I sit at work by my mother's side, continuing my studies or trying to earn some little extra money. This quiet life was enough for the happiness of both of us; our mutual love made us happy.

'And now, sir, I am going to explain to you what guilty folly has suddenly destroyed all this happiness, and plunged my mother and myself into terrible grief and shame. The architect, my employer, is a passionate man, who in his fits of ill-temper meets the slightest faults with violent words. The most patient clerks and servants can never stay with him longer than a few months. I, who after having been received at his office, thought I had discovered that the man under this rough exterior had a good heart, I bore everything and showed him no ill-will. After a little time he seemed to regard me with favour, almost with affection, though at the same time I by no means escaped his hard and sometimes cruel words.

'I served my master with faithful diligence; he had already twice slightly raised my salary. I esteemed myself happy, for although I scarcely earned enough to provide for the expenses of our household, still I was able to make my mother tolerably comfortable.

'One morning my master called me into his study. When I appeared before him he asked me smiling, "William, have you ever travelled?"

'"I have once been to Antwerp," I replied; "once to Aalst, and once to Hal."

'"Not further? So you have never left the flat country, then?" he said laughing. "Have you never seen any hills in your life?"

'"Not yet," I replied.

'"And you would like to see them?'

'"Yes, sir. It has been a dream I have often indulged in," I answered.

'"Well now, come nearer and listen," said my master. "It is now three years since, at the request of a nobleman at Liége, I drew some plans for the building of his country-house and for the laying out of his estate. The gentleman did not find my drawings to his taste, and refused to pay my bill. I have just received a letter which tells me that he has changed his mind, and that he holds ready for me the sum of 500 francs, which he owes me. You have now and then for some time done a little extra work for me. I want to repay you for this, for right is right, and I have not forgotten it. I am somewhat rough, but I can see well enough, William, that you are an honest and industrious youth. The idea has come into my mind to give you a mark of my confidence. I can with little expense receive the 500 francs from Liége, but I am rather glad to take the opportunity of giving you the journey to Liége, as a little recreation and reward. What do you say to it?"

'"Oh, sir!" I replied, quite moved, "you don't know how happy your generous proposal makes me! And then shall I be able to visit the beautiful mountainous country?"

'"Look," continued my master; "here is a receipt, which you will take to the address I shall give you. The sum will at once be paid you. And here I give you sixty francs for your travelling expenses, and grant you, moreover, a week's leave of absence. Try to be economical, and you will be able to see not only the beautiful city of Liége, but also to visit its charming neighbourhood, Chaudfontaine especially, and perhaps even Veviers. I am trusting you, remember, with a sum of 500 francs; I need scarcely advise you to be cautious and watchful, for you are a steady and sensible young man. Now leave the office, and start as soon as possible."

'With feelings of deep gratitude I took leave of my master and ran to my mother, to tell her the good news. I should, I told her, only go to Liége and back, and probably be able to save twenty or thirty out of the sixty francs. I should also gain four whole free days out of the eight allowed me, during which I should work at home. I could thus earn some more money, which was much needed, as we still owed the baker, butcher, and other tradesmen, a good deal, and I hoped we might thus pay all our debts.

'But my mother said that we ought not from economy to frustrate my master's generous intentions. The money he had placed in my hands ought to be used as he meant it to be. I ought, she said, gratefully to take the opportunity of seeing the beautiful scenery, and, after ten years' incessant work, the whole eight days ought to be spent in rest and pleasure.

'My mother accompanied me to the diligence; though she shed some tears at this first parting with her son, she was as happy as I was in the thought of the joy I was about to have among the beautiful mountains.

'At Liége I alighted at a very modest inn, and then went off to the nobleman, to give him my master's receipt for the money. The 500 francs was at once paid out to me in gold Napoleons. I put them in a leather purse, which I concealed in my breast. In the street I fastened up my pocket with three pins, and now, having rested and refreshed myself without further anxiety, I began to walk about the town of Liége enjoying all the sights of this fine city.

'Returning to supper at my inn, towards the close of the day, I found at the table a young gentleman from Antwerp, who soon took my fancy by his friendly behaviour and pleasant conversation. We talked together till it was time to go to bed about the beautiful scenery, and the wonderful situation of the city of Liége, in the lovely valley of the Maas.

'This young man was a commercial traveller. In the morning he was going on to Spa, where he had some business. All that he told me about the beauty of the neighbourhood of Spa so excited my curiosity, that before we retired for the night we had settled to travel to Spa together. He would make haste and finish his business, and then take me round and show me all that was worth seeing: for he had several times visited this watering-place, and so knew it well.

(To be continued.)

WONDERS OF NATURE.

STALACTITE CAVE.
GROTTO OF CAPRI.

ONE ought to be a bit of a chemist to understand the how and why of the pretty and fairy-like picture here set before our eyes. The rock out of which the grotto is hewn or scooped is limestone. Were it a sand-rock cavern there would be no icicles of stone hanging point downwards, like the sword over the head of Damocles. But, being a limestone cavern, the case is different; it is what you see, a fantastic, fretted roof, most strange, most wonderful. It is due to one of the softest, subtlest, and most persevering things in nature—I mean, water. The rain of heaven falling on the surface above the grotto sinks through the turf and the earth, and reaches the limestone. Here it finds little crevices and crannies, and makes its downward way, in obedience to the law of gravity, until at length it has trickled through the rocky mass, and has found a crack in the roof of the cavern. By this the water has become charged with carbonate of lime, and when it becomes again exposed to the air each drop loses its carbonic acid, and is obliged to give up its limy treasures and leave them behind ere it falls. Other drops keep oozing out laden in like manner, and are obliged to leave their carbonate of lime behind; and so, in the course of many years, the long icicle-looking pendants are formed which we call, for lack of a simpler word, Stalactites. Underneath the stalactites you may observe, on the floor of such caverns, heaps made of similar material, to which the name of Stalagmite has been given. These heaps are flatter, and they are formed of the remainder of the carbonate of lime which the falling drop was not able to deposit on the stalactite above. When Brown *quartus* gets into the upper second, he will have the Greek verb, which is the root of stalactite and stalagmite, at his fingers' end. Meantime we must refer you to Brown *major* for the same, as it might look odd in the pages of *Chatterbox*.

In the Archipelago, among many islands, is one called Antiparos, where there is another wonderful stalactite cavern. Antiparos is a mass of white marble, which is limestone after all. You enter the grot by the side of a rock, through a low arch supported by several pillars. When you have gone about twenty yards a precipice bars your way. Down this you must descend, by means of ropes fastened to masses of stalactite. You then go on until you have to descend a second steep. You are now in a passage of marble, the colour of rubies and snow. The sides and roof glitter famously, and the walls are as smooth as if finished by expert stone-masons. A third precipice soon arrests your steps, this is like a sheet of violet-coloured glass, and now you are in a long passage, where the stalactites are most grotesque and fanciful. One more deep step, and then you enter the famous grotto of Antiparos. It is as long as a good-sized cathedral, and nearly square, and as high as an ordinary village church tower. From the dim roof hang the stalactites, some of them ten feet long and as thick as a man's body, all the work of innumerable drops of water finding their way from the surface above, through innumerable years. These ornaments are linked to each other by festoons, and other masses which are not unlike flowers; and on the rough, uneven floor, are the stalagmites, one of which attains the extraordinary height of twenty-four feet.

When the grotto is well lighted up it presents, as you may suppose, a very splendid appearance.

The stalactite cavern in the picture is in the island of Capri, a rocky and beautiful spot near Naples. The island rises into two heights, with a hollow between them. The pretty little town of Anacapri stands upon the higher of the two summits, and the people manage to get from their own town to the other town, Capri, by means of a steep flight of 538 steps. How one's legs must ache until the muscles get used to such an exercise as that of going up and coming down those weary stairs! The island, besides having the remarkable grotto, is rich in objects of interest and beauty. Here the Emperor Tiberius had a villa, and here he was perhaps residing when at Jerusalem our Blessed Lord was crucified for us men and for our salvation. G. S. O.

TWO WONDERFUL CAVES.

FAR away on the lovely coast of Italy lies the land of Capri, and cunningly hidden in its steep and rocky shores, is a strange and beautiful cave, called the Blue Grotto.

Some years since an Englishman while bathing is said to have discovered it, and coming out again, dazzled and amazed, he told the tale of its beauty so forcibly that now all the world of tourists flock to visit it.

And I, too, went with that world.

The steamer from Naples took me across the beautiful bay and made straight for Capri and the grotto, lying outside the rocky wall, while its passengers embarked by twos, or at most threes, in the little boats which hover like a covey of water-birds round the mouth of the cave. Such a small mouth, too! Not more than four feet wide or three high is the opening, so that a calm sea is necessary to allow even these tiny boats to enter, and then it is a matter of great nicety shooting through the opening. The boatman bids his passengers to lie flat in the boat while he stands up till the last moment, and then cleverly ducks too, at exactly the right time, his small craft flying in on a wave. It rarely happens that the rock on either side is touched, but this did happen to one boat of the company I went in with, greatly to the surprise of the lady passenger, who luckily was lying flat, as desired, with her head under a seat, or she might have been thrown out, the little boat dashing into the grotto quite on one side, but luckily righting itself almost immediately. Once in the cave, however, the most timid must lose all feeling but that of surprise and admiration, for no fairy-land is more lovely. Everything is coloured the most dazzling blue. The roof rises instantly to an immense height, and the cave itself is large enough

Stalactite cave. Grotto of Capri.

to hold dozens of the little boats that shoot so cunningly through the tiny aperture. There were steps leading up from the water at the higher end, supposed to have been placed there when the island was the favourite resort of the Emperor Tiberius, and to have led to one of his many palaces; but there is no way of penetrating into the island now by them, and the grotto is only to be reached by its little sea-door. A boatman jumped into the water after a while and created fresh surprise by the strange hue which his body assumed, something like silver, but always keeping the azure radiance which is the peculiarity of this cave.

Anything so unearthly and beautiful I never saw before. I was lost in admiration till my boatman suggested that it was time to get out again. And then I must confess I felt rather anxious.

The sea was not perfectly calm outside, and every wave filled up the small hole in the rock; it seemed a miracle choosing the exact second for pushing the boat through, and the idea of a possible miscalculation of an inch of space or a moment of time leading to the capsizing of our little craft was not pleasant. However, as I could not help or advise, I held my peace and my breath, and lay perfectly quiet till we emerged into daylight and open sea, washed out more easily than we came in, I thought.

And then the wall of rock rose up before me and the beautiful Blue Grotto was hidden from my eyes, though still to remain in my memory as one of the loveliest and most curious sights of Southern Italy.

And now I must tell you of the second cave, which, though I only made its accquaintance by reading of it, struck me at once as a cold northern sister of the Blue Grotto. It lies nearer us than this last, but has far fewer visitors; doubtless from its position in a stormier latitude.

The Holy Cave is in one of the Orkney Islands, and, as far as is known, has only been three times entered within the memory of man.

Mr. Grant, the minister of the parish, was one of the three, and he was so alarmed by his visit that he determined never to repeat it. Like the Capri Grotto, the entrance is from the sea, and is so small and low, that the least movement of the waves is liable to close it, and a heedless visitor, not observing closely the weather, might be prevented getting out again by a sudden squall. There is another very serious danger, too, in this cave; it is the resort of seals, and when disturbed they have been known to attack people. Still there are adventurous spirits who will brave all dangers, and Archdeacon Sinclair, late Vicar of Kensington, seems to have been one of them. As a young man he set his heart on visiting this cave, and applied to Mr. Grant to lend him his boat and his son for the purpose. That gentleman advised him against the expedition with the remembrance of his own alarms still strongly present; but young Sinclair and young Grant were not to be deterred. The former wrote a description of the cave, which in many points recalls the Blue Grotto to my mind, save that the brilliant colouring was nowhere to be seen.

'The cave was dark,' says Mr. Sinclair; 'and, unfortunately, we could not procure a single torch to light us; so we had to be content with two or three tallow-candles and a peat-fire. When we found ourselves at the formidable entrance, Mr. Grant would certainly have turned back had not the day been cloudless, and the sea as smooth as glass. We could distinguish pebbles and shell-fish at the distance of many fathoms. As we glided slowly into the cavern the roof seemed only a few feet above our heads, but it rose suddenly into a kind of hall so vast and dark that we could not guess its actual dimensions. The only objects visible were the long points of sparkling stalactites suspended from the roof.'

Mr. Grant wished to stop at this point, but his adventurous friend begged to push on further, down a dark passage, so narrow as hardly to admit the boat. Here the candles and peat-fire were the only light, and Mr. Grant, recalling his father's warning as to the seals, and the other danger of the wind rising and making forcible prisoners of the explorers, insisted on returning. So after firing off a gun, which occasioned a thousand reverberations, and brought down a shower of stalactites sufficient to stun the party had they fallen on their heads, they left the Holy Cave, rejoicing to have seen it once but resolving never to see it again. H. A. F.

WHO ARE THE SOLDIERS?

'Onward, Christian soldiers.'

THE clear voices of the boys sang out one summer Sunday evening in the parish church of one of our English villages, and as they came out in groups of three or four, one or two little fellows still hummed the air as if it was a hymn they loved.

'Hollo, Christian soldiers!' shouted a big, rough lad, who had been loitering outside during the evening service. 'Leave off that row, or I'll make you.'

The boy who was thus spoken to turned angrily round, and picking up a stone aimed it at the other, but did not hit him. A hand was laid on Frank Wilton's shoulder, and the Rector's voice said gravely, though not unkindly, 'Frank, are you forgetting where you have been, and what you have been doing? Is that the conduct of a Christian soldier?'

'Soldiers fight, sir,' said Frank, in a tone of half excuse.

'They do, my boy; but not with stones and sticks—not, that is to say, *Christ's* soldiers. Neither do they fight against their fellow-creatures.'

Frank looked as if he wished Mr. Vere would go away, just as Ned Steel had departed at the first sound of the clergyman's voice; great, rough Ned, who shunned church and all those belonging to it.

'Are you ashamed to fight under Christ's banner, Frank?' said the Rector. 'Do you not mean to be a brave, faithful soldier, taking up the fight against the world, the flesh, the devil, and persevering in it by God's grace until your life's end?'

The boy looked up earnestly, 'Yes, sir, I do wish it, and I mean it too when you are talking to me, or when we are in church and sing that hymn we had to-night; but then, you see, it is so hard to do it when the time really comes.'

'It is hard, Frank, but then you are not alone; Christ is with you to help you conquer yourself and your evil inclinations. He does not leave you when temptations come, either from the world or your own

heart, or companions who wish to make you do wrong. But you must not wish only, you must *act*. Begin to-night, and the first thing which happens to make it hard for you to be patient, or kind, or humble, just then remember that Christ your Master is calling you to bear witness for Him.'

Frank ran off, determining to try to act on the advice given him; for he was a well-disposed, thoughtful boy, in spite of a hot temper and many other faults. Before he had gone twenty yards, Ned Steele's face appeared from behind a hedge, and in a mocking tone he took up the hymn which Frank had been humming when they met before; but the little fellow this time passed on sturdily, though his face flushed crimson.

'There,' said he to himself, 'I have fought one battle and gained a victory over myself; for oh, how I should have liked to pitch into him!'

In less than two minutes Frank's great friend and chief companion came running up.

'Frank, Frank, don't be in such a hurry! We are out early, so you can come for a walk to-night.'

Now Mrs. Wilton had told Frank always to come straight home when service was over, and though now and then he had disobeyed, he meant to fight to-night against the temptations; so he refused Charlie's request, and trotted on homewards, feeling somewhat pleased with himself.

'Dear me, it's not so hard as I thought for!' said he to himself. 'I'm a braver soldier than Mr. Vere thought for.'

Alas for us all when pride comes creeping in! alas for Frank, a fall was at hand!

'Mother! mother! I came straight home, though Charlie Reed did want me to go for a walk. I fought against the temptation, though it was pretty hard, I can tell you, and——' but here Frank's voice changed from exultation to anger, as he caught sight of his little brother, who was handling somewhat roughly one of his school-prizes, and, without a moment's thought, he had seized the book and given Harry a sharp box on the ear.

'Oh, Frank, Frank!' said his mother, as she tried to quiet her younger child sobbing. 'When will you conquer that hasty temper? When shall I see you fighting like a good soldier of Jesus Christ until you gain the victory over yourself?'

'Don't, mother! don't talk like that!' cried Frank, with tears starting to his eyes. 'I know it all, and I wish to do it; and this very evening Mr. Vere was talking to me, and I made up my mind to try, and I *did* try, mother, and I succeeded too: but, you see, I've broken down at last, and all about such a little thing, too!' And the boy sobbed with vexation at his failure. But he soon cheered up when his mother talked to him, and told him that not by one effort but by many, not by one battle but a constant steady combat against self and against sin, do we at length become conquerors, and that they alone are worthy to be called Christ's soldiers who enlist in His service with brave, true hearts, and, in spite of many a fall and many a failure, persevere unto their lives' end.

F. E. S.

'QUIZ.'

THERE is a very small kind of poodle, which is termed the Barbet. This little dog was formerly in great request as a lady's pet.

Some years since I made acquaintance with a comical little dog named 'Quiz,' which I believe to have been a Barbet.

He was very small, not larger than an ordinary rabbit, and was overwhelmed with such a torrent of corkscrew curls that his entire shape was concealed under their luxuriance; and when he was lying asleep on the sofa he reminded the spectator of a loose armful of mop-thrums. While reposing, his head could not be distinguished from his tail; and when walking, his trailing curls collected such a mass of leaves, dry sticks, straws, and other impediments, that he was frequently obliged to halt in order to be released from his encumbrances.

Passengers were often stopped in their walk by the singular animated mop that rolled along without any visible means of progression; and I have more than once been witness to a warm dispute respecting the position in nature which the strange animal might occupy. Some thought it *might* be a dog, while others suggested that it was a young lion; but the prevailing idea referred little Quiz to a place among the bears.

He was a most amusing and clever little animal, readily picking up acquirements, and inventing new accomplishments of his own. He would sit at the piano and sing a song to his own accompaniment, the manual, or rather the pedal, part of the performance being achieved by a dexterous patting of the keys, and vocal efforts by a prolonged and modulated howl. He could also 'talk,' by uttering little yelps in rapid succession.

Like all pet dogs he was jealous of disposition, and could not bear that any one, not excepting his mistress, should be more noticed than himself. When his mistress was ill he was much aggrieved at the exclusive attention which was given to the invalid, and cast about in his doggish brain for some method of attracting the notice which he coveted. It is supposed that he must have watched the interviews between medical man and patient, and have settled in his mind the attraction which exercised so powerful an influence upon the physician; for just as the well-known carriage drew up to the door, Quiz got on a chair, sat up on his hind legs, and began to put out his tongue, and hold forth his paw, as he had seen his mistress do, and evidently expected to be treated in a similar manner. His purpose was certainly gained, for he attracted universal attention by his *ruse*. He had not patience to keep his tongue out of his mouth, but rapidly thrust it out and as rapidly withdrew it again.

Poor Quiz died very shortly after I made his acquaintance, a victim to the cholera, which at that time was rife at Oxford.—*Rev. J. G. Wood, M.A.*

Quiz at the piano. By Harrison Weir.

'THE PRIZE,' for Girls and Boys, full of Pictures. Price One Penny, Monthly.
To be had everywhere.

Published for the Proprietors by W. WELLS GARDNER, 2 Paternoster Buildings, London.

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Chatterbox.

"I sank down crushed and hopeless on a chair."

THE TWO OLD FRIENDS.

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

(*Continued from page* 163.)

HE started early and reached Spa before noon. After taking some refreshment, my friend at once went into the town to transact his business. When two or three hours after he returned to me, he seemed very happy. He had had good luck, he said. Not only had he received orders for his master, upon which he would make at least 1000 francs profit, but he had, moreover, gained quite 70 francs for himself. He would not live sparingly to-day, he said; and he pressed me to go and dine at the table-d hôte of a grand hotel. I was not to mind about the expense, as he would pay all for me out of his gain.

'I allowed myself to be persuaded. The Antwerper was so merry and so good-natured that it was hard to refuse him. We came, then, after a long and very pleasant walk, to this splendidly spread table. I felt timid and abashed in the presence of the rich ladies and gentlemen who sat down to table with us, and I dared not speak a word. My friend certainly must have been used to such society; for he chatted away cheerfully, and seemed quite at his ease. I had to yield to the Antwerper's pressing, and drink several glasses of Bordeaux with him. As at home I never drank any wine, my head soon grew hot, and my tongue broke loose, and I talked and laughed. My friend called for a second bottle, a red, strong wine, which ran like fire down my throat.'

'It was Burgundy,' muttered the doctor, who was listening with excited attention.

After taking a few glasses I felt like one bewitched, and I listened to my own voice, amazed at my own eloquence.

'A second bottle followed; but my friend did not allow me to drink more than a couple of glasses: he finished it all himself. I then followed him to a building, which enticing music invited us to enter.'

'Poor lad!' said the doctor; 'I foresee with horror what befell you. You allowed yourself to be enticed to go and look on at the gambling.'

'*Alas!* yes, sir!'

'And have you lost much?'

'All!'

'What! Five hundred francs!'

'Yes. And my travelling money.'

'Unhappy man! Your master's money!'

The young man had bent down his head, and remained overwhelmed in silent anguish.

'But you were quite out of your senses!' exclaimed the doctor, in a tone of sorrow and indignation.

'I was senseless and blinded by the wine, which worked on me like a poison.'

'Perhaps they robbed you?'

'No, sir; I alone was guilty.'

'Was your conscience quite dead? What you did was sheer robbery!'

'Yes, yes!—a base, detestable crime!'

'But how did it happen?'

'It seems to me like a painful dream,' replied the young man, very sadly. 'I know that, first, following the example of my friend, I put down only a five-franc piece on the gambling-table, with the firm determination to risk nothing more. Unfortunately I won two or three times, then I lost again. I became excited, and possessed by the demon of gambling. When I had lost all my travelling money I long withstood the further temptation. A gentleman explained to me that one was sure to win if one continued to play for a long time in the same colour, and always doubled one's loss. In this way, he said, I should get all my money back again. In the blind madness of play I drew out my purse and risked a Napoleon; and thus,—thus I went on gambling, till I found nothing left in my pocket but the leather purse. My friend, who had also lost, but not so much as I had, led me back to our inn, and tried to comfort me on the way. I was not to let my courage fail, he said. He would pay all our expenses at the inn; he had still enough money left, and would play again to-morrow. He had discovered now how the chances went, and was sure to win. He would gain enough to give me back my lost 500 francs. My head was dizzy—the light, the noise, the exciting passion, my drunken condition, utterly confused my mind. I went to bed, and slept so heavily that I did not awake till the sun stood high in the heaven, and the Antwerper came to rouse me. I had a violent headache, and at first could scarcely bear the daylight: my brain burned like fire. As soon as I came to my senses, and to the full remembrance of my guilt and my shame, I began to tear my hair, and sobbed in despair and terror. I longed to die, and thus to stifle the worm which was gnawing at my conscience.

'The Antwerper was also sad, and repented greatly at our folly. He, too, cursed the wine and the gambling; but my utter despair made him forget his own trouble. He tried to comfort me, but his words availed nothing to remove my extreme misery.

'I had got up, and hurriedly put on my clothes. My companion was terrified at my words. I cried, I howled, I wished myself far away in solitude, where I could punish myself for my cowardice. He kept me back, and endeavoured by prayers and entreaties to bring me to reason, and said that he would use force to prevent me from doing myself an injury. He would not leave me, and if I refused to listen to him he would summon the people of the hôtel, and if necessary the police, to his aid. My guilt would then be made public, and even in Brussels it would be known that I, William Hoofs—the son of a widow—had stolen 500 francs in order to gamble with them.

'This anguish quite overwhelmed me. I sank down crushed and hopeless on a chair, declaring myself ready to submit quietly to my companion. I sank into a state of terror and remorse; I scarcely heard what my friend said, and remained silent and morose, given up to despair.

'The Antwerper had to go back to Liége, and from thence to Namur and Dinant. He said that he would take me with him to Namur, and pay the diligence fare for me. He could do no more, as he too had lost

a great deal of money. From Namur I must make my way to Brussels on foot.

'I could not resist him: the agony I felt at the thought of my crime becoming known made me as quiet as a child. I followed him wherever he led me.

'It was night when we approached Namur. My companion, who could no longer pay for me at an inn, advised me to get out in the suburbs before the gates were shut. I could then, he thought, during the night, go some way on my road to Brussels, and reach Havre in the morning.

'The diligence put me down at a short distance from the town, and a moment after I found myself alone in the solitary dark road. I could now think over my crime and its consequences; despair made me mad. With hasty steps I went back to the road which led to the river Maas. With my eyes fixed on the rushing stream, I knelt on the ground and implored Heaven for pardon for the new crime to which I was driven. Then I ran to the water, in order to hide my guilt and shame from men. Ah! there stood my mother, holding out supplicating hands before me to keep me back! I saw her tears flowing, I heard her entreating voice, and yet I wished to pass her by, and I took one more step towards the brink But then there arose out of the surging water itself the image of my father, who with outstretched finger and flaming eyes motioned me back! I began to tremble with terror. I fled from the spot, straight through the fields, running onward without knowing what I was about.

'It seemed as if my feet had more sense than my head, for they brought me on to the highroad to Brussels. I wandered on the whole night; when morning dawned I pressed into the thick of the wood, hiding myself from every one. At last, in the forest of Tercamaren I reached a thickly overgrown place, not far from Boitsfort. I had come to the end of my strength, and fell down fainting on the grass. A little time after I came to myself again. What was I going to do now? Return to Brussels? Tell my master I had gambled away his 500 francs? But he, so passionate in disposition, and so stern on any point of honour, he would deliver me up as a thief into the hands of justice, and my mother when she heard these dreadful tidings would die of despair and shame. I deserved my doom! but my heart broke at the thought of my good mother's agony, and I dared not leave the shelter of the wood for fear lest any one should see me.

'Between Liége and Namur, when I was in the Antwerper's company, I had taken some food for the last time. Since then,—two nights and a day,—I had eaten nothing but herbs, roots, and the bark of young trees. At the end of this wretched day, driven by hunger, grief, and despair, I fell into a violent fever, and entirely lost my senses. What delusion my delirium held before me I know not, but I sprang up and ran with haste through the darkness to Elsene, and came before my mother's dwelling. Then my true position flashed through my heart. I saw my mother sleeping in her chair by the fire, perhaps dreaming of her son and of his enjoyment among the mountains, and of all the wonderful things he would have to tell her about. And should I now awake her to tell her that her son is a thief, that he must go to prison, that his father's name is for ever dishonoured?

'I fled away accusing myself. A voice seemed always calling into my ear, "Kill yourself, coward! but save your poor, innocent mother!" This voice, this evil spirit, made me take that knife into my hand and led me into your way, sir. He made me hope that thus, by force and by murder, perhaps, I might obtain 500 francs and perchance remain undiscovered. I do not know how it was, my mind was completely led astray; I was mad and blind! The rest you know, sir; I have come to you to fulfil the wish of him who saved my mother's life. To-morrow morning my time of absence will be up, and I must return to my office.'

'And you mean to return there?' asked the doctor.

'No, sir.'

'What do you mean to do, then?'

'Dead men are never taken to prison,' replied the youth, in a gloomy but resolute tone. 'The sentence of justice does not affect a corpse. My mother will weep over the loss of her son, but she shall not lament the loss of his honour.'

'Frightful and wicked thoughts are now leading you astray,' said the doctor. 'Come, be calmer, and do not despair so completely; perhaps there are yet means of helping you. Suppose I were to go and speak to your master?'

'Useless, sir! At your first word about my guilt he would spring up like a furious lion, and proclaim my disgrace in his office and to the whole street. He cannot control his temper, and is without mercy for any act of deceit or dishonesty. Forgive a poor, unhappy youth, for the crime he meditated against you, sir, and leave him now to his fate.'

M. Christiaans gazed thoughtfully on the ground for a while; then he said to the youth suddenly, 'So you came here without any hopes from my pity?'

'Five hundred francs!' exclaimed the young man; 'was ever such a sum given to a perfect stranger?'

'Indeed, it is a very large sum!' replied the doctor. 'No, no, I shall not give it you!'

'I can well understand that, sir.'

'But if I were to lend it to you?'

'You say you could lend it me!' exclaimed the youth, with a gleam of hope in his eyes.

'Let me think the matter over a little. You require the 500 francs to place at once in your master's hands, without mentioning your misfortune to him? Your mother is to know nothing about it, and with joy to press you in her arms? Your honour would be saved; and you, preserving the remembrance of your guilt in your conscience, are to continue as before to walk in the path of virtue, to support and care for your good mother. You will be honest and remain so; will you not?'

'Oh, sir!' cried the agitated young man, with tears in his eyes, 'you have given my mother her life, now are you about to save us from disgrace, from death, and my poor soul from eternal ruin? And I, how could I ever be capable of dishonouring your wonderful generosity by my conduct?'

The doctor opened a desk, and returning to the table put on it a number of gold Napoleons. 'Well, now,' he said, 'I will lend you the 500 francs.'

(To be continued.)

THE THIRD DAY.

By the Author of 'Earth's Many Voices.'

AWAY to the healthful hills,
Where the wind blows fresh and free;
Away to wander along the shore,
And breathe the breath of the sea;

Away to the pleasant fields,
Away to the silent wood;
For people weary of pomp and care
These beautiful things are good.

So away goes the tired rich man,
And the weary man of the state;
Away goes the lady, weary too
With the pomp of the rich and great.

And the poor man saves if he can—
He must pinch to save, you know—
To take his children at Whitsuntide
To see where the daisies grow.

O rich folk, resting from state,
O workers, ceasing from care,
O children, who love the daisied fields,
When you breathe the fresh pure air,

When you wander by hill or sea,
When you rest in the quiet wood,
Give thanks to God for the glad 'Third Day,'
And own that He made it good.

The Governor requesting the Countess to accept the dog as a present.

FIDEL, THE BOHEMIAN DOG.

A Story of the Thirty Years' War.

THE Swedish general, Torstenson, had defeated the Imperial marshal, Count Gallas, on the Elbe, and scattered his whole army. It was to be feared that the Swedes would now penetrate into Austria, and lay waste the Imperial territories. Generals Hatzfeld and Götz got together, therefore, with great efforts, a new army, and strengthened by the Bavarian troops, marched with it into Bohemia, resolved there to await the victorious foe, and to dispute his further progress through the Austrian dominions.

This occurred in the spring of the year 1645. On this occasion the Imperial troops encamped in several of the villages which belonged to the Countess Chotek, and the Generals, Counts Hatzfeld and

Götz, at the same time stayed in her castle. The young Countess was then very sad. Her husband had died about a year ago, and left her with her little son Rudolph, of four years old, alone and unprotected in these dangerous times. Suitors, indeed, were not wanting, who were eager to protect the beautiful and rich widow; several poor cousins of her late husband especially, who longed to be lords of her large estates, sought her hand: but Countess Chotek could not make up her mind to marry again and to give her child a stepfather. She preferred to remain without any male protection, and had herself done all she could to defend her tenants from the horrors of war, or, at least, to alleviate them.

On the 5th March, 1645, the battle of Jankowitz was fought. The Swedes remained the victors: they attacked the castle of the Countess, pillaged it, and then set it on fire. Countess Chotek had, with her son and a little dog, which was much attached to her, hidden herself in a subterranean vault at some distance from the castle. Here she waited in terror till the terrible noise and turmoil of the plundering host ceased, and a long, gloomy silence succeeded. At length the poor lady ventured forth from her hiding-place, in order to seek food and assistance for herself and for her child, who was crying for hunger. Bitter was her grief when, instead of her stately castle, she saw only a heap of smoking ruins. In her woe she pressed her child to her breast, and prayed to the merciful God for help and protection. Suddenly a Swedish soldier, who had concealed himself behind a tree, sprang out; he raised his musket as if about to fire at her, but then he let it drop, and in a rough tone asked her whether she was the Countess Chotek. When she replied that she was, he tore the child from her arms: the Countess tried to seize the robber by the hair and hold him fast. Then the Swede became furious. Holding the screaming child with one hand, with the other he struck violently around him with the butt-end of his musket, and at last he gave the poor lady such a blow that she sank fainting to the ground, and here remained lying unconscious, till some time after she was found by her returning servants; they brought the unhappy mother, who was hovering between life and death, to the estate of one of her relations, where for several weeks she lay dangerously ill. But every trace of the stolen child was lost, and the little dog too had, since that ill-fated day, vanished altogether.

After her recovery the mother sank into a condition of the deepest melancholy. Her relations at last sent her to a convent, that she might be better cared for; but her husband's cousins took possession of the beautiful estates, which could only be held by the male line. A very modest widow's portion was all that was granted to the poor Countess. In a few years the unhappy lady recovered, both in body and soul, under the kind attentions bestowed upon her in the convent. Naturally, she now thought all the more eagerly of her stolen child, and meditated as to how she could again obtain possession of him: she was firmly convinced that the soldier had only stolen her little Rudolph, and had not killed him. This hope sustained her, and gave her some slight comfort: at last the poor mother decided to travel from country to country, and not to rest until she had found her child, or breathed her last in the attempt. The Peace of Westphalia, which was concluded in 1648, had put an end to the horrors and devastations of the Thirty Years' War. It was possible, therefore, for the poor lady to carry out her intention, and to start on the journey which she had planned.

It was natural that Countess Chotek should first turn to Sweden: here the robber of her child must be, if he were still living: here she might hope to discover him, as his form and features were vividly before her mind. So she started on her journey, and in the year 1650 safely arrived at Stockholm, the beautiful capital of Sweden; and now the difficulties which stood in the way of her undertaking became clear to the Countess. Where and how should she seek and find in that great city, and in the still more extensive country, whose language she did not understand, the robber of her child? But when means and ways seemed to fail her, the gracious God came to her with His fatherly aid and comfort.

One day as she was walking anxiously through the streets of Stockholm, a little dog suddenly came up to her, and barking with delight jumped round her: she could scarcely trust her eyes; it was her little Fidel (so the dog was called). She spoke to it by its name, and the faithful animal could not contain itself for joy. The Countess took it in her arms, it clung to her lovingly. But soon a man from among the people came forward; she did not understand the words he addressed to her, but she saw by his manner that he was the master of the dog, and was laying claim to it. The Countess offered him her purse, but he shook his head, and would not accept it. At last one of the spectators, who understood German and Swedish, interfered in the dispute, and persuaded the contending parties to seek the Governor's decision in the matter.

Field-marshal Count Torstenson, who, after his victorious return from Germany, had been appointed Prime Minister and Governor of Stockholm by Christina, queen of Sweden, was sitting in his study when the Countess Chotek was announced to him by one of his servants. He immediately sent word to the lady that he was ready to receive her. She came, accompanied by the man, who carried in his arms the little dog which was the cause of the dispute. Countess Chotek begged the Governor's protection from the man who wished to take the dog away from her. She stated that that dog had been stolen from her during the war on her estates in Bohemia. As she had now in so wonderful a manner found it here in Stockholm, she would willingly pay any price for the faithful animal, but the man refused to sell her the dog again; she implored the Governor to use all his power and influence, in order to induce the man to accept a large price for the dog.

Torstenson now questioned the Swede,—who, from his statement, was a servant at an inn,—how he had come into possession of the dog, and why he refused to sell it when such a high price was offered him for it. The Swede said, 'I bought the dog some months ago on the highroad, where it was offered me by a strange girl for a trifling price. The animal can perform many pretty tricks; therefore

my master's inn has come much into repute, because people like to see the clever dog. I have, in this way, made a good income through the gratuities which strangers give me, and the lady can never pay me so much as I shall earn. In short, the dog belongs to me, and I have no intention of selling it.'

The Countess implored the Governor eagerly, and with much emotion, to aid her to obtain her property back again; but the man said, 'It may be that the dog did formerly belong to this lady, but now it is mine, and remains mine; and if the Governor will not help me to maintain my rights I shall appeal to the Queen, who, as she is a lady herself, is not likely to be bribed by a woman's tears, or influenced to do an act of injustice.'

Count Torstenson gave the man with his dog into the charge of his guards, that he might be alone with the Countess, when he said to her, 'I am very sorry not to be able to fulfil your request. The dog is now this man's property: even if the animal was taken away from you during the war, you could not demand it back again, for the soldier, as you know, has a full right to such plunder, according to the customs of our age.'

When, on hearing these words, the Countess burst into tears, Torstenson continued, 'It is impossible for me to believe that you could lament so deeply for the little dog, clever and affectionate as it is. There must be some mystery connected with it which makes the possession of this animal so valuable to you. I beg you to grant me your confidence in this matter, so that by counsel and deed I may assist you as far as is possible.'

Then the Countess told to him the whole of her sad story, which we know already, and concluded with the words, 'I hope to find my child here; the dog alone can show me the way to him, and I will pay any price, and make any sacrifice, if I can obtain possession of the faithful animal.'

The Governor had listened to her story with hearty sympathy. At last he said,—

'It is indeed impossible for me to know whether your child is still living. But I am sure that it was not killed then. The long war had made my soldiers indeed hard and rough, but I do not believe that any of them was capable of such an act of cruelty.'

He then ordered the man to be brought into a neighbouring room. By promises, persuasions, and by the help of a few threats too, he at last succeeded in purchasing the animal from him at a very high price. He begged the Countess to accept it as a present from his hand, and during her residence in Sweden to come and live with his wife, so that he might himself the better be able to attend to her affair, and support her by all the means at his disposal. With grateful heart the Countess accepted the present, which, in her eyes, was so invaluable, as well as the generous invitation of the Governor. Henceforth she lived in his palace, where his wife treated her with the greatest kindness and sympathy. Torstenson himself was unwearied in his efforts to come upon the traces of the robber of her son. For this object he issued a proclamation, and promised a large reward to whoever could furnish information as to whence that dog, which had been so admired in the inn at Stockholm, for its wonderful cleverness, and which he had himself purchased, had come from, and how it had been brought to Sweden. No one came forward except a young girl. She related that her deceased mother, who had served as a sutler woman for several years during the war, had brought the dog home with her on her return. But she never could bear the dog. By her orders she had at last sold it to a man whom she met on the highroad. Her story agreed entirely with that of the inn-servant as to how he had got possession of the dog: but how her late mother had come by it the young girl could not tell.

Thus the attempt unfortunately failed; but the Countess still could not make up her mind to leave the Swedish capital and return to her native land. A voice in her heart seemed to whisper to her that God would yet hear her fervent prayer, and give her lost child back to her.

(Concluded in our next.)

A DOG DYING OF GRIEF.

A LATE issue of the *Forest and Stream* contains the following touching story of a dog's love for its master:—'About two weeks ago a man named Parcels, a blacksmith, residing near Dobbs' Ferry, went hunting "coons" at midnight. His companions consisted of a neighbour, residing close by, and a faithful dog. While searching for game at Sneedon's Landing, on the Hudson River, Parcels approached the brink of the palisades, and by some mishap lost his balance and fell down a distance of 30 feet. His friend having missed him, sought him, and by diligent search found him lying where he had fallen, and his faithful dog by his side moaning piteously. On attempting to approach the body the usually friendly animal strongly protested by growls and threatening attitudes. The man, seeing that his companion was seriously injured, went for aid, and in a short time returned with a surgeon and some friends; but the dog, which lay with its head across the body, refused to let them touch the treasure it so faithfully guarded. They were at length compelled to drive him away from his post by blows. An examination proved that the man was dead, so the remains were placed in a boat and a piece of canvas thrown over them. The dog jumped into the boat also, and placed his head across his master's face, and remained there until the landing. The body was then placed in a waggon and conveyed home; but no sooner had it been covered than the loving friend again sought his old post. After the burial the dog became much depressed, refused its food, and wandered listlessly about, moaning in a low, nervous tone, and heedless of everything. He would pay no attention to any of the inmates of the house, and all their efforts could not cause him to manifest any signs of recognition. After dragging along for a week, caring neither for food nor water, the faithful dog died—a martyr to love for his master.'

Dog protesting his late master.

'THE PRIZE,' for Girls and Boys, full of Pictures. Price One Penny, Monthly.
To be had everywhere.

Published for the Proprietors by W. WELLS GARDNER, 2 Paternoster Buildings, London

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Chatterbox.

"The youth fell on his knees before the doctor."

THE TWO OLD FRIENDS.

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

(*Continued from page* 171.)

THE youth fell down on his knees before the doctor, who tried to check his feverish demonstrations of gratitude: but the young man seemed as if he would worship the noble-hearted man who had given him back his honour and his life. The doctor succeeded at last in making him a little calmer, then he said:—

'You must repay me the 500 francs as soon as you are able.'

'Henceforth,' he answered, 'we shall do all we can to save the bread from our mouths; I shall work like a slave to——'

'No, not so; no such great privations: you must obey me. For the next two years, without laying any special hardships on your mother or yourself, you must live carefully and put by what you can. Remember well the day of the month: I, too, will keep a note of it. At the expiration of that time you will come to place in my hands what you have saved: if the sum is not complete, then we must arrange for the future settlement of the rest. Go home now and continue your career of life; your heart is good at bottom, your love of your mother has inclined me to think well of you. Remain honest and fulfil your duties, then I will give you my esteem and respect.'

The young man went to the door, but he again returned to seize his benefactor's hand and kiss it. Then urged by the doctor himself he left the room, his heart full of joy and gratitude.

'Farewell, William Hoofs, till we meet again!' cried M. Christiaans after him.

CHAPTER III.

MONTHS passed away, and the doctor heard nothing more of William Hoofs; he often wondered how he was getting on, but he took no steps to satisfy his curiosity.

In the course of the fourth month he saw the young man once in the distance on the Namur Road; and as he seemed to be coming towards him he hoped to see him nearer, and was quite ready to exchange a few friendly words with him, but William Hoofs vanished in a side-street. Perhaps the young man had not recognised his benefactor?

A few weeks later, however, the doctor met him again as he was going down the Magdalen Road. This time William plainly knew his deliverer, for he started, and looked embarrassed when he saw him; he seemed to hesitate for a short time, and then he stepped aside into a shop entrance, where he remained standing, with his back turned to the street, till the doctor had passed.

The doctor, feeling that William Hoofs purposely avoided him, passed by him without speaking to him. The young man's strange conduct grieved him. Had he forgiven a criminal attack, and sacrificed 500 francs to save a young man without any heart, who already wished to disown him?

The doctor did not meet William Hoofs again, and he began almost to forget him. Other events of much greater importance turned his attention from the past to fix it on the present.

The French Emperor, Napoleon, had invaded Russia with more than half a million of soldiers and 30,000 horses; after several hard-fought battles he had taken possession of Moscow, the capital. The tidings of these brilliant victories, following each other very rapidly, had filled Europe with admiration or with fear; but, in all cases, had deeply moved the minds of men.

The doctor had now another reason for anxious care, and this was quite a personal one. His son Bernard had won the affections of Miss Veronica Wouters, and had begged his father to ask M. Wouters for the hand of his eldest daughter for him. When the doctor made this request, the wealthy merchant expressed his surprise: he admitted that Bernard was a good-hearted and sensible young man, well fitted to make Veronica happy, but as a man of business he regarded those affairs with some coolness. Before answering the doctor's question he wished to know how much his son would be able to settle on his bride; as Veronica had only one sister, she would have a fortune of 600,000 or 700,000 francs. Her husband ought to make a settlement of 100,000 francs on her, and he supposed that in this the doctor would agree with him.

At these words M. Christiaans was as if he had been thunderstruck. A hundred thousand francs! He was not sure that he had so much money in the world. Moreover, he could not disinherit Bernard's sister; he could not deprive his wife and himself of everything.

Unfortunately, the merchant thought that the doctor was much richer than he liked to allow. A warm dispute arose on the subject, and they parted discontented with each other. The doctor returned home with the sad news that a marriage between Bernard and Veronica could not be thought of—the thing was utterly impossible. His son's grief pained him, but he could find no help for it. It was a cruel blow, but they must try to bear this trial with patience.

The sorrow and the entreaties of the young people after some time brought the two fathers together again. M. Wouters said that he was willing to make a sacrifice to cheer his daughter, who was in such low spirits since she had been disappointed about her marriage. He would reduce his demand by 20,000 francs, and would now be content with a settlement of 80,000 francs.

The doctor still had to refuse. He said that it was impossible for him to give his son more than 30,000 francs.

This proposal seemed ridiculous to the merchant. Unless the doctor could give his son 70,000 francs at least, the matter must be regarded as completely broken off. M. Christiaans sincerely loved his son, and the young man well deserved it, for he was brave and good, and attached to his parents.

It keenly pained the doctor to be obliged to wound the heart of his Bernard with such cruel tidings, but he could not do what was impossible;

and even if, at the sight of his son's bitter tears, he had deprived himself of all his property, he could not, as a husband and father, expose his wife and daughter to want, and perhaps even to poverty, after his death. He therefore regarded this so ardently desired marriage as quite hopeless; and in this sad feeling his wife and daughter joined him. Bernard alone still hoped that in time Fate would be less hard upon him. He was confirmed in this thought by Miss Veronica herself, who had whispered to him that she would be his bride, or would never marry at all.

At this time there came alarming reports from Germany. Men spoke about great defeats which the French army had suffered in Russia; but the news was all so uncertain, and so contradictory, that no one knew what to believe.

The real truth was that Napoleon, forced to retreat from burning Moscow, had been overtaken by the terrible frost of a Russian winter. The French army, overcome by cold, snow, and hunger, pursued and surrounded by the enemy, reckoned its dead by hundreds of thousands in a barren and desolate land, so that out of the half million of strong men who had started on the expedition there remained only a miserable remnant.

Napoleon left his army in a sledge. He hurried through Germany in a plain coach; and on the 18th December, 1812, he arrived unexpectedly in Paris. The beaten, but not discouraged Emperor, at once set to work to raise new levies in order to revenge his defeats. In the following month the French Senate issued a decree, ordering 300,000 conscripts to be raised; and if in the short time allowed so many soldiers could not be found, the young lads who would not be eligible to draw for the conscription till two years later must also now take their chance in the drawing. Terror and lamentations were general, for after the last campaign, which had cost nearly half a million of men, no one doubted but that the conscripts would be led to the slaughter, and that few of them would escape death. Notwithstanding the national troubles, Bernard and Veronica continued to think of their love. Bernard had lately met Miss Wouters, but he dared not speak to her, as her father was by her side; but he had remarked how pale she looked. Certainly the girl was ill, and perhaps pining away! This thought had deeply wounded his heart, and he ran home, threw himself on his knees at his father's feet, and begged him to have pity on the unhappy Veronica and himself.

The doctor promised to risk another visit to M. Wouters.

When he went to make this last attempt he found that M. Wouters had been out for the last two hours at a meeting at the Town Hall.

Bernard was sitting with his sister by the fireside, for it was a cold March day. Their mother was busy with her needlework at a table, now and then she gazed sadly on her son.

The young man had not much hope of his father's success. He now gazed in silence at the bright fire on the hearth.

At last he exclaimed with a gesture of impatience,—

'How unfortunate I am!'

'Come, my son, do not distress yourself so,' said his mother. 'Be more reasonable: you don't know yet whether your father may not succeed this time.'

'Oh! dear mother, how can you talk so?' he replied peevishly: 'we know what are M. Wouters' conditions. My father has gone to M. Wouters to repeat this refusal. How can he be successful?'

'But, Bernard, don't make the matter worse than it is!' Mrs. Christiaans interrupted him. 'Your father, much as it pains him and restricts his means, is going to make a fresh sacrifice.'

'But it is not nearly enough, mother. M. Wouters will only shrug his shoulders and repeat his cruel sentence upon me and poor Veronica. My father is certainly the master, and I must submit to his decision; but do you think, mother, that in this matter he has done all he could for his unfortunate son?'

Mrs. Christiaans rose from her seat in amazement. 'Have I heard aright?' she cried, in a painfully upbraiding voice. 'Bernard, do you accuse your good father? Grief has made you lose your senses.'

'Oh, forgive me, mother!' said the youth, with sorrow: 'it was a sinful thought. I know that my father has a generous heart, and loves me tenderly, but why does he condemn me to a life of pain when my happiness can be bought with money?'

'Impossible demands are made on him,' said his mother.

'It is a terrible sacrifice. I know it; but still, mother, he could do it.'

'That is to say, it would be possible for him, if—do you understand, my son?—he were to give up to you all the property we possess, and place your sister and myself in the danger of falling into want and poverty. So far as it concerns myself, I have begged him more than once not to think of me, and to keep your happiness as the one object before his eyes. Your good sister has done the same. But you see that God has laid the duty upon him of providing for the welfare of us all with equal love.'

'He mistrusts my heart, he doubts my gratitude and my love,' said the young man, sadly shaking his head. 'Could I become rich, partly through your money and at the expense of your welfare, and suffer you to want, or allow your least wish to remain ungratified? Mother! your thus suspecting my love is like a dagger to my heart.'

'Oh, Bernard!' replied Mrs. Christiaans, 'I know very well that if all depended upon you we could risk all without any anxiety; but your mind is now clouded by trouble, and prevents you from looking at the matter in a fair and clear light. Once married, you are not altogether your own master, and have not supreme power over a fortune which equally belongs to your wife. Should you afterwards be able to give us help, it would be to him like receiving alms, and to which your wife would have to give her consent. From his youth your father has worked hard to support us. Do you not feel, my son, how his noble spirit would shrink before such a danger as this? Now his labours protect us from all want; but supposing he were to fall ill?'

'You are right, mother; it is true; I have lost my senses,' said the young man in a gloomy tone.

'And reflect too, Bernard, for years your father has been hoping to lead a less laborious life; he thought of resting in his old days, and amusing him-

Miss Wouters and her father.

self in the cultivation of flowers and plants. This dream he has given up, and he now looks forward without murmuring to being obliged to work on till the end of his life, out of pure love to you.'

'Alas! despair blinds me!' sighed Bernard. 'I have been unjust towards my father! No, no, whatever my lot may be I will remain grateful to my noble father for all his goodness.'

(To be continued.)

HOW LITTLE JACQUES KILLED THE WOLF.

From the French.

IN the beginning of the last century, in the village of Vitry in Champagne, there lived a peasant, the father of a child who was very small for his age, for he was eleven years old and appeared to be only eight. This boy was called Jacques Ferronnier.

Jacques killing the Wolf.

In those parts the very name of wolf is for children, and for many grown-up persons too, a terrible word. At certain seasons, when the snow covers the ground, to meet a wolf is anything but pleasant; for, when pressed by hunger, wolves do not hesitate to attack men.

Now Jacques, who had a hatred of these cruel beasts, and who had also a brave heart, one day asked his father what would be the best way of attacking them; for, added he, 'if I meet one I should wish to kill it.'

Thinking this question to be dictated by the simple curiosity of a silly little boy, the father replied by repeating a joke which he had heard uttered by some mountebank:—

'The surest way of killing a wolf, I am going to tell you, Jacques. As it is certain to come upon you with a widely opened mouth, thrust your arm

cleverly into its throat, as far down as possible towards its tail, and then draw it to you so as to turn the wolf inside out like a stocking.'

'Ah! but——' said Jacques, who did not see that his father was joking, 'perhaps my arm would not be long enough to reach down right through the wolf.'

'In that case,' replied the father, 'I think, that in thrusting your arm down the wolf's throat you would suffocate the beast.'

The child went away thoughtful, while the father went away smiling.

That year, in 1709, the winter was extremely severe; snow more than a foot deep covered the whole country; the wolves, who could not find a blade of grass to eat, even ventured to come into the middle of the villages and to enter the farm-houses.

One day, the father and mother of Jacques having gone out, he was left sole guardian of his little sister, who was still in the cradle.

While the door was ajar it was suddenly pushed open, and a young wolf appeared, who scented human flesh, and without further ceremony sidled rapidly to the sleeping little girl.

But the starving animal had reckoned without the lesson which had been given in joke to little Jacques, but who had taken it very seriously, and for some time had thought a great deal about it.

Immediately, without hesitating, Jacques threw himself upon the wolf, who turned upon him furiously, and, doubling up his fist, the brave boy forced it down the throat of the animal. The wolf struggled, but Jacques with the other hand had grasped the neck of his enemy; he had not strength enough to force his fist farther down the wolf's throat, but he pushed the wolf into the corner of the room, where he strongly held it till the beast fell upon the ground choked.

His excitement and the efforts which he had made during the conflict had exhausted the strength of the little victor, who fell down fainting by the side of the vanquished.

When the parents returned, great was their terror and their surprise on seeing the wolf and the child lying side by side. When Jacques came to himself his first words were:—

'The wolf has not eaten my little sister, has he?'

We have not heard anything of Jacques Ferronier's history after he grew up to be a man, but we think that the brave little peasant boy who risked his life to save that of his baby sister could scarcely fail to turn out a noble and courageous citizen.

C. S. C.

FIDEL, THE BOHEMIAN DOG.

(*Concluded from page* 175.)

FIELD-MARSHAL TORSTENSON now suddenly fell ill and died. His wife had the body conveyed to one of his estates at some distance from the capital, because she wished herself to retire here and lead a solitary life beside the grave of her beloved and never-to-be-forgotten husband. She entreated the Countess to accompany her on her journey thither: this she gladly did, for she was devoted to the deceased Governor in heartiest gratitude, and also was deeply attached to the widow, who had shown her so much kindness.

The Field-marshal's body was interred with great pomp and solemnity on his hereditary estate. Many soldiers, who long since had left the army, streamed in from far and near to behold their great General once more, and to show him the last marks of honour and respect.

The coffin was lowered into the vault, and both ladies had already retired to the castle, when, suddenly, wild cries from the village came upon their ears, and brought them out on the balcony. They beheld in the distance a multitude of people, who at first, with cruel noise, seemed to be pushing against each other; but then, with the loud cry, 'Strike him dead!' rushed up to the castle. When the crowd came nearer, the two ladies saw that it was pursuing a dog, and that with the cry, 'A mad dog! Strike him dead! strike him dead!' all were trying to hit him with stones or bludgeons. But the dog was clever enough to avoid them all, and ran with the greatest speed towards the castle. Countess Chotek, to her great horror, now saw that it was her own dog which was being pursued. The animal, meanwhile, had left his pursuers a long way behind him. Only one boy of about ten years old was close upon his heels, who was pelting the poor animal with stones. Both reached the courtyard together, and the Countess hastily opened the door of her apartment to save her tormented favourite. Scarcely had the bleeding and panting little dog been admitted, than the boy, too, his cheeks crimson with excitement, stood in the room and violently demanded the death of the dog, which had severely bitten his father. The Countess, who could now readily speak the language of the country, tried to calm the boy with kind words. But how astonished was she to see the little dog spring up cheerfully and affectionately upon him! She wished to quiet the animal, and called it again by its name.

Now the strange boy seemed to awake as from a dream, stared at the dog, and repeated to himself, 'Fidel! Fidel!' Then throwing himself on the ground, he embraced the faithful animal, and exclaimed, 'Yes! you are Fidel! my dear old Fidel! But where is the kind lady who used always to play with us?'

At the same moment a servant entered the room, and announced that the man whom the dog had bitten desired to speak with its mistress. The Countess ordered that he should be admitted at once. When the peasant entered the apartment she immediately recognised the features of the robber of her son, which had been so impressed on her memory. Before he could say a word she went up to him and addressed him with angry and reproachful voice:—

'Have I found you at last, you child-robber? The Almighty God has given you into my hands! Confess your crime! the dog has betrayed you! Where have you left my child?'

The man was thunderstruck at these words; he, too, knew the poor lady to whom he had caused such grievous sorrow, and he sank pale and trembling

to the earth. But the dog sprang fiercely at him, and could scarcely be kept back by his mistress, and prevented from further attacks.

At last the trembling peasant mastered himself enough to say, 'Yes, my lady! I am the robber of your child. Forgive me: I will confess everything, and restore your son to you.'

At her request he now told her the whole story, how he had been moved to the wicked deed, and what had been the consequences of it. He said: 'When, after the battle of Jankowitz, the castle had been plundered and burned, I came up to it with a few stragglers of our army: I searched through the smoking ruins, in which I hoped to find some valuable plunder; but as everything was destroyed, I was about to leave the spot in great discontent: I met a grand gentleman on horseback, who asked me whence I came and whether I had got much plunder. When I informed him of my disappointed hopes, he said that I might earn a large sum of money if I would undertake and carry out a commission from him. The promise enticed me, and I declared myself ready. The stranger then said, "That burnt-down castle belongs to a Countess who wished to betray the Swedish army to the Austrians, and therefore received the leader of the Imperial troops as her guest. Her evil plan has fortunately not succeeded, as your General has so bravely attacked the enemy and so signally defeated them; but the traitress must be punished for her cunning and deceit. She has, as I have just learned, concealed herself here in the neighbourhood. If you discover her and kill her and her child, I have received orders to pay you a thousand gold florins." I did not take long to consider this offer. Was it not a good work to punish a traitress? and such a large sum of money would be most welcome to me. The horseman promised to wait for me at an inn, which he minutely described. Here I was to give up to him the child's coat as a proof that I had executed the commission, and he would then give me the reward agreed upon. What now happened further you know yourself. I wanted to shoot you, but you were so beautiful and looked so pious; I wanted to kill your child, but my heart in my breast rebelled against such cruelty: undecided as I was, I at all events would seize the boy from you. After I had killed you, as I thought, by a blow from my musket, I hastened away with the child and gave him to a sutler woman who was well known to me, and whom I happened to meet on my way. I took off his coat, dipped it in the blood of a dead man who was lying on the battle-field, and then betook myself to the appointed inn. Here I told the horseman that I had carried out his orders and gave up the blood-stained coat, upon which he counted out to me the thousand gold florins. I now hastened to seek out the sutler woman again. The dog, who followed me at first, had remained with the boy. I determined to save the innocent child, to take him with me to my country, and there to give him to my wife, as we had no children of our own. When I had paid the sutler half the sum I had received, I persuaded her to return at once to Sweden and deliver the boy up to my wife. But I gave the dog to her, because it always fiercely attacked me, constantly trying to bite me. The sutler faithfully and exactly fulfilled the commission with which I had intrusted her. When I returned, at the conclusion of the war, I found the boy in my cottage. My wife and I have since then brought him up and loved him as our own child. My wicked deed would, perhaps, have never been discovered, had I not, out of love to my great General, come to attend his funeral: here the dog discovered and bit me. And now, my lady Countess, there stands your child! But forgive me what I have done to you, of which I have often deeply repented.'

With great joy and deep gratitude the Countess embraced her long-lost son, now at last found again and restored to her. Her love, too, soon succeeded in awakening anew in his mind the dim recollections of the earlier years of his childhood; so that he soon loved his mother. Like a true but Christian mother the Countess forgave the soldier the great loss and grief which, for so many long years, he had caused her.

From all she heard, the Countess soon was sure that the envious and avaricious cousins of her late husband had planned and carried out the robbery of the child. With her restored son she hastened to Stockholm, to present him to Queen Christina, and to commend him to her powerful protection. The Queen, who previously had heard of the matter from the late governor, was much delighted at the happy result. She caused judicial proceedings to be commenced, in which the robber of the child faithfully and exactly repeated his story. Then she sent a messenger, with a letter in her own hand, to the Countess's relations. In this she demanded of them to restore freely, and at once, the estates belonging to the Count, of which they had become unlawfully possessed, to his son, who was now found again. If they would do this, the Countess would forget and forgive everything, and the Queen would acknowledge it by her gratitude; but if they refused, the Queen would then, in the name of the Countess, accuse them to the Imperial Court: the consequences of this they could judge for themselves, by reading the statements of the Swedish soldier, of which an exact copy was sent them. Queen Christina's messenger soon returned with favourable tidings. No sooner had the Count's cousins read the letter than they declared that they were willing to give up the property quietly, under these favourable conditions.

Soon after this, the Countess with her son, who had been so wonderfully preserved and restored to her, returned to their home. The Swedish peasant and his wife also left their country, and went with them to Bohemia, because the little Rudolph did not wish to be separated from his adopted parents, who had become so dear to him. Mother and son were received with great rejoicing on their estates. They thanked the Lord, Who had so mercifully and graciously made all to turn out for the best. The little dog was loved by them all, and held in high honour till his death.

J. F. C.

"My Lady Countess, there stands your child."

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Chatterbox.

M. Christiaans blessing his children.

THE TWO OLD FRIENDS.

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

(*Continued from page* 180.)

O not be too cast down, my son. Perhaps your father will come back with good news.'

'No, mother, that is impossible. I have no more hope. Perhaps I could endure my own troubles with some patience, but I always see Veronica before my eyes. I fear that she is becoming ill and pining away! This terrible thought drives me mad!'

'Hush! hush!' cried Mrs. Christiaans; 'I think I hear your father.'

The young man jumped up. He heard a strange noise in the passage, in which he thought he caught not only the voice of his father, but also that of Veronica. His heart began to beat with hope, and he was so overcome that he had to lean his hand against a chair to support himself.

Then the door flew open. The doctor ran to his son, pressed him to his breast, and cried rejoicing,—

'Bernard! Bernard! thank God and be happy! Veronica will be your bride!'

The young man embraced his father with warmth as he stammered out words of love and gratitude.

M. Wouters and his daughter followed the doctor into the room. Veronica ran up to Mrs. Christiaans, threw her arms round her neck, and kissed her, repeating the tender word 'Mother!' in tones of love and joy.

The merchant, cold as he was in matters of the heart, was touched by the sight of the joy of all around him.

Bernard's mother and sister had placed their chairs near to the betrothed couple, and a conversation began about the happy life which seemed in store for them, about the wedding, and the furnishing of their house.

Meanwhile the two fathers were busy in a corner talking over the financial side of the approaching marriage. It seemed as if in a short time they were quite agreed on the matter, for M. Wouters came up to the betrothed and said,—

'Listen, children, to what we have decided. In these uncertain times we must make haste to seize happiness when it is in our grasp. We will get the legal papers ready with great haste, and have the banns published; within a month you shall be man and wife. In three or four weeks' time you would scarcely be able to get settled in a house of your own, but I have found a way out of that difficulty. On the day of your marriage you shall go to my estate at Boendale, and live there as long as you like.'

'Father! dear father! how kind and generous you are!' exclaimed Veronica.

'Thanks! thanks! you are overwhelming me with benefits!' stammered Bernard.

'We will thus arrange the matter,' continued the merchant. 'The rent of the estate, ought to be 5000 francs at least, but as you are just entering on housekeeping, and as you are my children, I shall only ask you 3000 francs for it.'

For all these many arrangements the young people had no ears; the thought that they were to live at the beautiful country-house at Boendale was so delightful to them, that they had both overwhelmed M. Wouters with words of deep gratitude.

M. Christiaans spoke solemnly:—

'The good God, Who has so manifestly protected me during my life now permits that, after long anxiety and suffering, our beloved children should have their sweetest hopes fulfilled. Let us for a moment raise our hearts to Him, and gratefully bless His Holy Name. May the Almighty watch over you, my children, and may He make your path in life——'

He was interrupted by the entrance of the maid, who handed him a folded paper and said,—

'A policeman has come with this letter for M. Bernard; he says that he is in a great hurry, and that I was to give it him at once.'

The young man took the paper, unfolded it, and fixed his eyes on it. A piercing cry escaped him; he turned pale; the paper fell from his hand, and he sank down on a chair, while, placing his hands on his forehead, he exclaimed,—

'Alas! alas! I must be a soldier. Shed my blood for the tyrant—become food for the cannon!'

The news fell like a thunderbolt in the midst of this so happy household.

The doctor seized the paper, which had fallen on the ground, and began to read it. It was a command from the Military Commission, whereby Bernard Christiaans was informed that, having been drawn as a conscript in the late levy, he was to appear without fail, at nine o'clock on the morning of the following Thursday, before the Council of Revision, and then—subject to their approbation—to start at once to the depôt of the regiment to which he should be assigned. He was informed, at the same time, that under no pretence could any delay be granted, and that all laggards would be punished with the severity of martial law.

Strong-minded as the doctor generally was, yet even he gave way beneath this cruel blow, and sank weeping upon a chair.

The room was filled with sounds of woe. Mother and children, brother and sister, were alike sobbing and lamenting.

'These are indeed terrible tidings,' said the merchant to the doctor; 'but I do not see why we should give way to such despair. There remains one way of saving Bernard. Seek a substitute for your son.'

'Alas! M. Wouters, it is cruel to hold out such a false hope. The last levy carried off all the young men. I know a hundred sons of rich citizens, who were obliged to go to the army, although their parents were ready to make the greatest sacrifices. No substitute is now to be found.'

'They are very scarce, I know,' answered M. Wouters; 'but that not a single one is to be had is not true; and in proof of it, it is only a week ago since Baron van Cranings succeeded in purchasing a substitute for his son. And what is more,' continued the merchant, 'I heard it said last week that Steens,

the agent, had two substitutes. The time is too short to be wasted in tears and lamentations. The best thing we can do is to suppress our fears and sorrow, and each of us go in different directions to seek for a substitute, and let us not rest till we have found one.'

'And do you think there is any hope of success?' asked the doctor.

'I think there is little doubt about it; but, of course, great sacrifices must be made. Baron van Cranings gave 15,000 francs to purchase his son's exemption. Perhaps you would not be ready to give so much. In that case ——'

'To preserve my son, my good Bernard, from a certain death,' exclaimed the doctor, 'I am ready to give everything, even to the bed on which I sleep! Is it not so, mother? is it not so, Catherine?'

'Yes, yes, everything!' was the reply.

'Well, now, Bernard,' he said, 'let us follow the good advice of M. Wouters. We will search all day for a substitute. If we find one, let him cost what he will, then on our knees will we bless God for His mercy! Come! come!'

And the doctor, followed by his son and M. Wouters, left the house, with some faint hope in his breast.

CHAPTER IV.

The whole of that day, till nightfall, and all the next day, too, the doctor, his son, and M. Wouters, ran through the whole of Brussels and its suburbs, seeking a substitute. Now and then, indeed, during these sad endeavours, a beam of hope would cheer their minds, when they heard of some young man who was willing to sell himself; but always did they meet the same disappointment, for all these young fellows, the leavings of former levies, had some disease or malformation which disqualified them for service in the army, so that most of them had already been rejected by the Council of Revision.

The doctor, that he might save his poor son, offered 15,000 francs for a substitute, and, if necessary, would have given more; but the two immense levies, following so quickly on each other, had quite drained the country of its men. Moreover, as joining the army was now looked upon as an almost certain sentence of death, even the very poorest persons refused thus to sacrifice their lives for money.

As the time passed away in fruitless efforts, and the fear that Bernard must go sank more into their hearts, the doctor's wife and daughter wept the more, and raised their hands to Heaven to implore help from God. Veronica, accompanied by her younger sister, came every morning and afternoon to mingle her tears with theirs; always on the watch, and eagerly longing for the happy tidings that Bernard had at last been able to purchase a substitute.

But such tidings came not; on the contrary, when Bernard and his father returned home for a few moments and were plied with anxious questions, their sad answer always was: 'Nothing! alas, nothing yet!'

Then the poor women would sink back weeping in their chairs, filling the room with their cries and sobs, while the men again started off on their depressing and fruitless mission.

And thus the third day arrived. Next morning Bernard must appear before the Council of Revision to hear his sentence pronounced. The doctor had lost all hope of finding a substitute in time. No resource remained for him but to obtain a delay. Who could tell that, if two or three more days were granted him, he might not succeed in his search? Encouraged by this thought he went to the Prefect, to the General in command, and to the Military Commission. But urgently as he implored he was everywhere met with coldness. The commands of the Emperor were stern in the extreme; and the authorities were forbidden, under any plea whatever, to grant even a single day's delay.

Utterly dejected, M. Christiaans was slowly walking along the Aremberg Street to his home. His eyes were bent on the ground, he muttered sad words to himself. He was suddenly aroused from his painful thoughts by some one who tapped him on the shoulder, and exclaimed,—

'Good day, M. Christiaans. Oh, I have joyful news to tell you!'

'Joyful news!' replied the doctor, while his eyes began to beam with hope. 'Oh, might it be true? speak, speak, my good Marck!'

Full as he was of his own sorrow, he did not doubt but that the cattle-dealer was about to tell him that a substitute had been found for his son. But his friend, seizing his hand, said cheerily,—

'You remember, doctor, my Jacob, who was drawn for a soldier and sent with the Grand *Army into* Russia, don't you? For months we had received no letters and heard nothing of him. We had lamented over him as dead, but to our unspeakable joy Jacob lives; he returns to Brussels next Saturday, free from military service for ever. Now can you wish me greater happiness?'

'Certainly, certainly, I congratulate you, indeed,' stammered the doctor. 'Free from service! how is that possible?'

'Ah! he may say with reason that a happy misfortune has occurred to him,' replied the cattle-merchant. 'My son some two months ago was struck in the leg by a cannon-ball during a terrible battle, and was carried off the field. After some time he recovered, but he is lame in the left leg. He writes that this lameness will decrease in course of time, and perhaps disappear altogether; but at all events he is no longer capable of serving in the army, so he has been dismissed and declared free from service. Now, friend Christiaans, I must confess that you are not the only fortunate man. See, I am so happy that I feel as if I could embrace every one who passes by! Come with me, friend Christiaans. Are you in trouble?' asked the cattle-merchant, amazed.

'In trouble?' repeated the doctor: 'my heart is breaking with anguish. Ah, friend Marck, you told me once that I was the luckiest man on earth, and I have not denied that God has favoured me with great mercy. But now I am quite willing to sacrifice the good fortune of my whole life if I could thus avert the terrible misfortune which threatens me.'

'A terrible misfortune? Is your wife——'

'Alas! my son Bernard must become a soldier! You can estimate by the grief you have yourself felt what my heart now suffers.'

(*To be continued.*)

JEM AND HIMSELF.

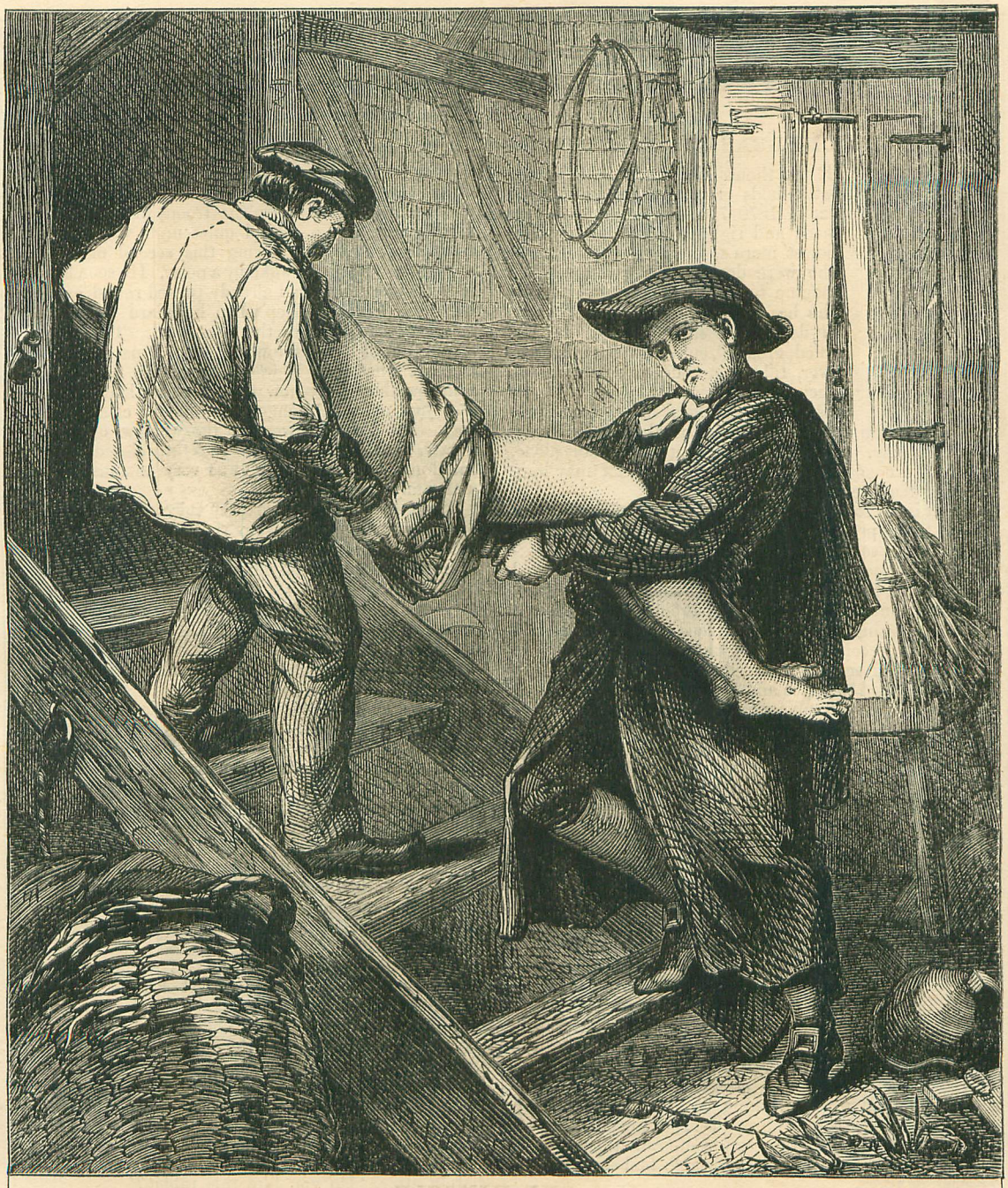
By the Author of 'Earth's Many Voices.'

I'VE heard a proverb,' said Jem to himself,
'But it is not true, I say;
"Fair and softly, softly and fair,"
'Tis said, "go far in a day."

Here goes Dobbin, softly enough,
But none would call it far;
There the train goes screaming along,
And it flies like a shooting star.

And here I work as fair as can be
For honest bread, I know:
While some in the world get lands and gold,
And get it no matter how.'

"Fair and softly," the proverb says,
"They two go far in a day:"
'Folk may think it,' said Jem to himself,
'But it is not true, I say.'



Unpleasant Quarters.

Said himself to Jem, 'Now list to me,—
What a silly lad you are!
Who says a word about lands and gold,
Or a flight like a shooting star?

Do you think it means from pole to pole,
When it talks of "far in a day?"
Do you think poor Dobbin, who softly goes,
Falls short of his task, I pray?

Now plod along at your honest work,
And honest bread you may win;
Hurry along for lands and gold,
You may reach them only by sin.

"Fair and softly go far in a day,"
The good old proverb is true;
There are other ways that go farther maybe,
But, Jem, they are not for you!'

THE UNPLEASANT QUARTERS.

FOR the thousands who perished on the battle-fields or in the hospitals in the war of 1870-71 many bitter tears were shed; and rightly, too. But one feels almost more severely the fate of those who were described as *missing*. We imagine to ourselves some poor fellow who has been lying wounded, perhaps for days, in a stone quarry, who has called, groaned, suffered from thirst and fever, till at last death releases him. Deep in some thick wood a similar lot has befallen another. Many others, probably, were secretly murdered in their quarters by the enemy. In this war, among the Germans alone, 7000 are noted down as missing. What may have been the fate of each separate one?

It is not to be wondered at that some such thoughts as these presented themselves to the mind of a Prussian soldier, who, provided with his billeting-ticket, knocked at the door of a solitary one-storied house in the city of Sens in France, where a man, much muffled up, but with piercing eyes, received him, showing plainly how pleased he was that he had only to receive one such unwelcome guest. The soldier had scarcely entered when the master of the house closed the door and hastily drew the bolts, as if he wished to say, 'Now you are in the trap.'

Through a dark passage he led the Prussian before a door, which he opened, and then said, 'Here, this is your room!' A cold, chilly blast met him. The prospect was by no means a consoling one; a little courtyard, a desolate garden, all surrounded by lofty brick walls, while to the right, built on to the house, was a loft, the top of which was reached by a ladder.

'It looks very much like a prison,' said the soldier to the master of the house, though he thought to himself all the time it was more like a den of robbers.

The man replied, 'Oh, you are quite safe here; nobody will interfere with you.'

'I am not in the least anxious about that,' the soldier interrupted him. 'Fifty thousand of my comrades are in advance of us, and five times as many are following in our rear: woe to him who touches a hair of a German's head!'

The landlord now led his guest into the sitting-room, where he saw a cross-looking, sallow-faced woman, and a plain-looking boy of about thirteen. Supper was served: instead of a good piece of meat, our soldier had to gnaw some rabbit-bones,—in short, he deplored the ill fate which had sent him to such quarters.

The master of the house was a retired lawyer's clerk. He told his guest, who spoke French very well, that his brother was a priest in a neighbouring village, the name of which he mentioned.

'Ah,' said the soldier, 'in that church there is a beautiful carved representation of the Descent from the Cross by an old artist of Colmar; is there not?'

'Yes,' replied the landlord, quite amazed: 'but how did you know that?'

'I read it in a book.'

'The Prussians find out everything,' he said, in a whisper and with a sigh to his wife, while dismay was depicted in his features.

They went to bed. The first night the soldier, who was a well-educated man, slept very well. His orders the evening before were to be ready to start punctually at eight, when the troops were to march further on. But a second quiet night was thought to be desirable. But during this second night the soldier was suddenly awoke by a noise. He soon heard nothing more, and had already turned round on the other side to go to sleep when he heard plainly the voices of two men in the courtyard. The soldier sprang out of bed. He would light a match and see at least what time it was. Yesterday the lucifers were on the table—now they were no longer there. But just at that moment the church clock struck one. The Prussian went to the window, opened it gently, but the shutters were so tightly closed that he could not see out, and he was very anxious not to make any noise.

The soldier plainly heard the voice of the landlord, who was calling down from the loft, 'Hand me up the soldier's helmet. All right! and now the sword! If the Prussians should find any traces all would be lost.'

'Ha! ha!' thought the soldier, 'now we have them! The murderers have made away with one of our men!'

Again the listener heard, 'Right! now hand me up the head. Now the body!'

At that moment the soldier was able to open the shutters a little, and what did he behold? At the entrance of the loft, much muffled up and with a hood over his head, stood the master of the house, and at the foot of the ladder below a second male figure, who was just handing up a pale human head; then followed the body, and next a leg.

The Prussian shuddered. Nothing was more certain to him than that the wretches had committed a crime and wished to conceal their victim. But as the witness had no weapons with him, and did not wish to make a noise, he put off taking the necessary steps till the morning, which dawned slowly enough, but brought with it a fresh quartering of six men in the house where our soldier was. At breakfast there was a second gentleman with the landlord, apparently a priest. By his voice the soldier soon recognised that he was the helper of the previous night. The German felt very ill at ease in this society; but when his host had the impudence to ask the soldier how he had slept he could not contain his anger, and said, 'Badly enough! I was disturbed by voices in my sleep, and, as I verily believe, by yours too, sir!'

The landlord turned crimson, but asked immediately after, 'Do you like this rabbit?'

But the soldier continued: 'Yes, I heard your voice, and another's too. Yours, sir,' addressing the priest, 'fell upon my ear; only you two stood in the courtyard during the night. We Prussians are very sharp and far-sighted.'

'How——you saw?' cried the priest, horrified; and the landlord shrieked out, 'And the shutters were so firmly bolted!'

'Yes, yes, you may have had very good reason to do so,' said the soldier; 'but I have seen quite enough, and more than enough.'

'Oh! good M. le Prussien,' implored the priest, 'do not betray us, or all is lost!'

'Ah, what! you think that when a crime is committed I should close my lips, and through my silence become a partaker in it? Never!'

'A crime!' said the host; 'it is not that, it was done with the best intentions.'

'It was, indeed,' continued the priest. 'My brother informed me yesterday that the Prussians already knew of the great work of art in our church, which thousands come to see; it was in danger.'

'Yes, yes, M. le Prussien,' said the landlord, 'you yourself alluded to it, and asked me about our celebrated Descent from the Cross, which with its beautifully carved life-size figures adorns my brother's church. I thought directly they will carry that masterpiece off to Berlin, because it is so famous.'

'My brother sent me word of his suspicions,' added the priest, 'and we determined to save our treasure. I separated myself first the Lord's mother, who stood at the foot of the cross; then the Roman soldiers with their helmets, swords, and shields; and lastly, the body of our Saviour from the walls; took the whole work to pieces, and conveyed it to my brother's house for safety. When you consider that this masterpiece was the great treasure of our village, and that thousands every year come to us on a pilgrimage, each bringing money which helps to support my poor flock, surely you can scarcely call this *a crime?*'

The soldier, whose head and heart were in the right place, remarked that this time he had made altogether a wrong shot, and he said, 'I have really said a great deal more than I meant to say, but it often happens when one speaks in a foreign language that one does not always choose the right word.'

'Yes, yes, he who never makes a mistake in a single word is a perfect man,' added the priest good-humouredly; 'but if you like to go up the ladder, you can convince yourself of the truth of my story.'

'I do not doubt it in the least,' replied the soldier. 'Keep your work of art well concealed till the sky is clear again. To Berlin it is not likely that it ever would have been carried.'

Meanwhile the hour for marching had arrived, the landlord and his brother took leave of their guest in the most friendly manner, and he was glad enough to leave the uncomfortable quarters behind him, whose inhabitants he had so nearly unjustly accused of grievous wrong. It was a lesson to him not to judge by appearances, but to inquire into matters a little before speaking with certainty. J. F. C.

WHAT IS LIFE?

A LITTLE crib beside the bed,
A little face above the spread,
A little frock behind the door,
A little shoe upon the floor.

A little lad with dark brown hair,
A little blue-eyed face and fair,
A little lane that leads to school,
A little pencil, slate, and rule.

A little blithesome, winsome maid,
A little hand within is laid;

A little cottage, acres four,
A little old-lime household store.

A little family gathered round;
A little turf-heaped, tear-dewed mound;
A little added to his soil;
A little rest from hardest toil.

A little silver in his hair,
A little stool, and easy chair;
A little night of earth-lit gloom;
A little *cortége* to the tomb.

Public Opinion.

THE TAILOR-BIRD.

I THINK the readers of *Chatterbox* will like to hear a short account of a very clever bird, which I venture to say is more skilled in the art of sewing than many of the young ladies who may read these pages.

'A bird sew!' I think I hear you reply in wonder; 'how can a bird be taught to use a needle and thread?' They need no needles, neither any of your thread nor cotton for their dainty work; but I will tell you more about them. The clever bird of which I am now speaking is found in foreign lands, and is called the Tailor-bird. Well, indeed, has it earned this name, for if you could see its nest you would say that many a tailor cannot finish his work so neatly. One species is found in Hindostan; and this tailor-bird chooses a bush with large leaves, of which she forms her nest by sewing them closely together, with threads of her own spinning, for she gathers cotton from a neighbouring plantation, and by the aid of her very long bill and slender feet works the cotton into a strong thread. She then tacks the leaves firmly together round and round the nest, till it is quite concealed from view. If any of my young readers should go to London, they can see some of these curious nests in the British Museum.

There is another kind of foreign bird called the Orchard Starling; and these are so common in some places that there is scarcely an orchard without them. They suspend their nests from the trees, and form them of a kind of long, tough, and yet flexible grass, which they sew through and through across their nests in every shape and direction, just like darning a stocking. A gentleman once had the curiosity to pull out one of these threads of grass, which he found to be thirteen inches long: this single thread was actually hooked backwards and forwards thirty-four times, in and out of the nest.

I cannot finish my short account of the tailor-bird better than with the following lines:—

'Behold the bird's nest,
Mark it well, within, without!
No tool had he that wrought, no knife to cut,
No nail to fix, no bodkin to insert,
No glue to join—his little beak was all:
And yet how neatly finished! What nice hand,
With every implement and means of art,
Could compass such another?'

BERTHA E. WRIGHT.

The Tailor-bird. By HARRISON WEIR.

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Chatterbox.

He is now standing before you, Doctor."

THE TWO OLD FRIENDS.

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

(*Continued from page* 187.)

'YOUR son must leave you?' cried the cattle-dealer with emotion: 'Go to the army! Who would have thought of such a thing? Poor friend Christiaans, I understand your grief too well.'

'Thus do the fortunes in a man's life change,' remarked the doctor. 'A single day is enough to plunge the very happiest of us into the depth of despair. You get your son back again whom you had given up for lost, and I lose my poor Bernard, whom I thought to be free from service, at the very moment when his marriage with Veronica Wouters was decided on. And my wife,—alas! poor woman! I fear lest she should sink beneath this fearful and unexpected blow inflicted on her loving mother's heart.'

They walked on for some time silently. The cattle-merchant, remembering his own similar grief, was deeply moved with sympathy and compassion. 'It is *terrible!*' he said. 'Your son Bernard a soldier! I can scarcely believe it. When must he go?'

'To-morrow he appears before the Council of Revision; immediately after he will be torn from us.'

'To-morrow! So soon, too! And haven't you been able to find any substitute?'

'Ah! I would give 20,000 francs for one, but not a single substitute is to be found.'

'They are rare, indeed; but that not a single one is to be found I can hardly believe.'

'You little know how, during the last three days, I have tried to find one. There is no street in Brussels I have not been through twice or thrice; no agent's office that I have not knocked at half-a-dozen times: all has been of no use! Now I am returning home having given up all hope. My poor son, my good Bernard, must leave us on the morrow.'

For a moment the cattle-dealer did not speak; then he said in a comforting tone, 'Certainly your trouble is very great, friend Christiaans; but why think that all young soldiers must die? You see that my son Jacob has returned alive and well. Why should not the same happen to your Bernard?'

The doctor shook his head sadly, and murmured, 'Alas! there is no longer any hope!'

They had now reached the top of the street. Seizing the doctor's hand, as if to wish him farewell, the cattle-merchant said, 'Come, friend Christiaans, don't altogether despair. Who knows but that you may find a substitute before the hour when the Council of Revision meets,—perhaps at the very time of its sitting even? You have always been so fortunate. Keep up your courage till your son's lot is really decided. Ah! if I only heard that you had found some means to keep your Bernard at home I think I should jump up and dance for joy! Cheer up, cheer up a little, my friend. Farewell till we meet again.'

The doctor turned from him and went slowly on his way. From his friend's words he had gained neither encouragement nor comfort. The cruel reality alone stood threateningly before his eyes. In his tortured mind there arose almost a feeling of envy that the cattle-merchant's son should be returning on Saturday, free from service, into the arms of his happy father; while Bernard, his own dearly-beloved son, would perhaps already that very Saturday be far away on the road to some scene of massacre! But he repressed these envious thoughts, and walked sadly on to his home. When he reached the Namur gate he hesitated for a moment. What woeful tidings did he bring to his sorrowing family? He already heard their cries of despair—he saw their tears flow—he seemed to hear them implore him to give them some news of comfort; but he, alas! must stifle the last spark of hope in their hearts.

However, he could not avoid delivering his sad message. M. Christiaans turned towards his house. He was just putting the key into the door, hoping to get in unperceived, when the maid, who had been awaiting his coming, opened it and said, 'Sir, five or six patients have been sitting for hours in your consulting-room, waiting for you.'

'Patients! patients!' grumbled the doctor with vexation. 'My head is not fit to attend to them to-day. I am far worse than they can be.'

'They refuse to go, sir,' observed the maid.

'Well, then, let them wait; perhaps my head will be clearer presently.'

And the doctor passed through the passage to the parlour, where at that moment his wife, his son, his daughter, together with Veronica and her younger sister, were sitting, the silence only broken by their sobs. At the sight of the doctor they all sprang up, and, just as he had foreseen, they raised up their hands imploringly to him, while a gleam of hope sparkled in their eyes as they awaited the news he brought them. He, overwhelmed by despair, replied in a hollow tone,—

'All is lost! No substitute is to be found.'

With a cry of anguish Mrs. Christiaans sank back in her chair, Veronica ran to her weeping and lamenting, Bernard threw his arms round his father's neck, while his tears poured down upon his breast.

For some time the room was filled with the sounds of lamentation. Then the doctor made an effort to rouse some faint hope in his despairing family, though he had little belief in it himself. He told them of the happy return of the cattle-dealer's son. It was, therefore, too much to say that none of the conscripts ever saw their homes again. Moreover, as ten or twelve persons were still looking out for a substitute, no one could say for certain that they would not be successful. It was indeed a very faint hope; but so long as the sentence was not really passed they ought to trust in the aid of a kind Providence. Then they all became calmer, and M. Christiaans, exhausted by his efforts in the city, was anxious to take a little rest.

'Children,' he said, 'several patients are waiting for me, I cannot refuse to give my advice; overcome your grief as well as you can. Perhaps there is yet hope. I will return to you ere long.'

The doctor went out into the passage, opened the door of his study, and rang for the maid, to whom he gave orders to admit the patients in their turns. As well as he could the doctor listened to the story of the complaints and sufferings of the patients, wrote their prescriptions, and dismissed them. Then, alone and released from the painful duties of his profession, he went to the table, let his head fall upon his hands and gave way to his misery. Before long the maid came in and said,—

'Doctor, there is a gentleman in the ante-room who must speak to you at once; he is in a great hurry, he says.'

M. Christiaans stared at her as if he had not understood what she said: she repeated her words.

'Leave me in quiet,' he said; 'the gentleman has come at an inconvenient time, I cannot see any one!'

A few minutes after the maid came back again. When the doctor burst out with impatient words, she gave him to understand that the gentleman said that he had brought him news about a substitute for his son. No sooner had M. Christiaans heard this than he exclaimed,—

'Let him come in at once!'

'Are not my eyes deceiving me?' he exclaimed, when the visitor who had been announced entered the room. 'You, William Hoofs, do you bring me news of a substitute for my son?'

'Yes, sir,' answered the young man: 'it is only two hours ago since I heard by accident in what sad distress you are.'

'And you, remembering that I once did you a kind action, have gone out to seek for a substitute? Have you found one? The light in your eyes makes me think so! Oh! should the good God have allowed you to obtain the deliverance of my son, what a blessing that would be to me!'

'Let your heart rejoice, doctor; it is so. Your son shall not be a soldier. A free man shall go to the army in his stead.'

'Is he a young man without any defect or disease?'

'Without the slightest defect of any kind: he has already been before a military doctor.'

'Who is the man whom Heaven has sent us?'

'He is now standing before you, doctor.'

M. Christiaans started back in surprise.

'You? William Hoofs! You are about to become a soldier in the place of my son? Impossible! Are you thus going to restore life and happiness to a whole family?'

'Why not, doctor?'

'You have a mother?'

'I have, indeed—a most beloved mother.'

'You may not leave her: the law forbids any one who, as an only son, is legally free from service, to become a soldier, without the written consent of his parents.'

'My mother has given me her consent.'

'And she loves you? How can that be?'

William Hoofs went to the door, assured himself that it was well shut, and then said in a low voice, but very seriously,—

'You see, doctor, when I heard of your misfortune and your grief, I remembered how you once, with a more than human kindness, gave 500 francs to a youth quite unknown to you, who had pointed his knife at your breast; and how by this help you restored to him his honour and saved the life of his mother. Then God put the thought into my mind that I might thus pay some of the debt I owed to you. I knew well that my mother would shrink back in horror at the plan, but I knew her heart too. I told her all that you know without concealing anything, and I showed her what a debt of gratitude we owed to the noble-hearted man who, after having restored her health by his art and his charity, also preserved her son and herself from dishonour and shame. She wept, indeed, long and bitterly.'

'She wept! your poor mother?'

'Yes, she wept; but between her tears she exclaimed, "Go, William: do your duty towards our benefactor. Go, my child! I will pray to God for you, and God will protect you!"'

The doctor felt inclined to throw his arms round the young man's neck, but he checked himself and said, 'William, is not this a too hasty decision? Will you not repent it? Do you know quite clearly what you are doing?'

'Oh, quite clearly, sir. If you should refuse my offer you would make me most unhappy.'

'And what conditions do you propose?'

'None!'

'What! Perhaps I do not understand you. I have offered 15,000 francs for a substitute, this sum you shall receive. I give you, besides, the money I lent you.'

A shade of sorrow passed over the young man's face, while he shook his head in refusal.

'Perhaps it is not enough?' exclaimed the doctor. 'Speak, I am ready to make the greatest sacrifices.'

'Your words grieve me,' sighed William Hoofs. 'I implore you, do not speak to me of any reward of that kind. Should I sell my life for money? No, I give it back to him to whom I owe it. Let me save your son, let me think that I can make my benefactor happy, esteem me enough to accept my free offer, and I shall be as grateful to you as if you had shown me a fresh proof of your generosity.'

(*Concluded in our next.*)

TOM'S GOLD DUST.

'THAT boy knows how to take care of his gold dust,' said Tom's uncle, often to himself, and sometimes aloud.

Tom went to college, and every account they heard of him told how he was going ahead, and laying a solid foundation for the future.

'Certainly,' said his uncle, 'certainly; that boy, I tell you, knows how to take care of his gold dust.'

'Gold dust!' Where did Tom get gold dust? He was a poor boy. He had not been to California. He was never a miner. Where did he get gold dust? Ah! he has seconds and minutes, and these are the gold dust of time—specks and particles of time—which boys and girls, and grown-up people, are apt to waste and throw away. Tom knew their value. His father had taught him that every speck and particle of time was worth its weight in gold; and his son took care of them as if they were. Take care of your gold dust!—*Little American.*

SPRING.

A LITTLE pale flower, a little pale flower,
All down in the meadow growing:
Oh, children dear, the spring is here,
And darksome winter is going.

The children come with a bound and a shout,
For it is a gladsome meeting;
Not the fairest rose in summer that blows
Will get so joyous a greeting.

O little pale flower! O little pale flower!
With a love-lesson cam'st thou hither;
Thy stedfast eye looks up to the sky,
And my heart hath followed it thither.

And I think to myself, the good Lord God,
Who in all our joy rejoices,
How glad must He be that He sent forth thee,
When He hears the children's voices!

E. M. A. F. S.

BADGERS.

ONE day at the Zoological Gardens, I saw the group of Badgers as they are here given. Little do visitors to the Gardens take into account how much a wild animal goes through till it has got used to a state of things so opposite to its natural habits. Their wants are attended to as much as possible, but cannot be always met; and so we have here a devoted mother, worn out by the demands of her cubs, and vainly anxious to hide herself from daylight and man's gaze. She has long given up trying to dig or scratch her way out. All she can do is to lean against the wall, ready for a last defence, should anybody come within her prison. She dares not curl up into a ball, like the one cub, and go to sleep; while this little careless imp on her back, happy and trustful, adds to her tiredness by his weight.

The Badger is a brave, harmless, and *not* destructive animal; he does much good by foraging for grubs, beetles, and caterpillars; comparatively very little harm among game and fruit, and yet people are often very cruel to him. In this country he is caught and horribly baited by dogs, merely that a ruffian may boast of his cur's courage, while in France they treat him worse than Sir Walter Scott describes it in *Guy Mannering*, where the Northern Britons excuse themselves by saying, 'Oh, it's only a Brock.' The Badger is a good husband and a good parent. He is cleanly, and retiring. He may now and then relish fruit, or a young partridge, or pheasant, or their eggs; and then it is a rare occurrence of good luck to him to get these.

I went one day to Berkhampstead to sketch some Badgers' holes or earth (as they are called), from Nature. In the afternoon I met a fine old country gentleman, a real old sportsman, who quoted some celebrated huntsman or whipper-in, whose saying was, 'We must have Badgers if we want foxes, as the former dig the earths for the latter.' There is some hope, then, for my quiet friends for sound winter sleep, and quiet midsummer moonlit nights of wakeful enjoyment, when the cubs play and gambol. If Master Reynard comes and expels them from their *snuggery* they can dig another with their strong claws in no time. There are gentlemen who like to preserve Badgers here in England. But in France the people are very cruel to them. A brother of mine took a country-house near Bordeaux for several summers. One day the farmer who let it asked him if he would like to see something, and presently showed him a live Badger under a tub. There he was with the iron trap and chain still on the inflamed limb by which it had been caught. On inquiry he found the poor beast had been there and in that agony for *ten* days, and never had anything to eat or drink. On his remonstrating, the farmer said, 'Oh, the thief, he had good things enough in his lifetime, he shall have *no more*.' My good-natured brother then brought him bread, soaked in water, and afterwards kept him supplied with bread and milk, but the people were very angry with him for doing it '*to the villanous beast*.' He could not get them to take the trap off, until the Badger was sold to some travelling beast-show.

The skin of the Badger has some value, being very thick and strong. Horse-collars are covered with it on the Continent. His fat is also useful, like bear's-grease; and shaving, softening, and gilder's brushes are made from the hair. The proper time for killing the Badger is the beginning of winter, when he composes himself for his long sleep. He is then very fat, and the fur in the best order, and he may be knocked on the head easily and without much pain to him.

In Germany (for instance, in Thuringia), the foresters make long runs underground, which can be got at from spots they know from above. These runs are made in spring, so that Mr. Brock, travelling for winter quarters in autumn, finds them ready to hand. He goes quietly to sleep, and only wakes to find himself adding to the comforts and exchequer of the forester's family.

A RICH MAN.

AT the close of the last century died Mr. John Elwes, possessed of about a million of money. A rich man, verily; but did he enjoy his riches, or use them to benefit either himself or others? Let us turn to the record of his life to answer the question.

Educated at Westminster, a gentleman by birth and behaviour, he early developed a taste for saving, which rapidly choked all other good tendencies in him.

Always in easy circumstances, he became very wealthy in middle life, inheriting the fortune of an uncle who had also lived and died a miser. The only instance in which he may be said to have sacrificed money to pleasure was the keeping of fox-hounds; but even in this matter his penury made itself conspicuous.

A huntsman in the present day would marvel to hear what Mr. Elwes considered the duties of his green-coated servant. To rise at four and milk the cows, then rush into the house and lay breakfast for his master or any friends he might have with him; to hurry to the stables, saddle horses, and get the dogs, and take his place in the hunting-field; to return, rub down two or three horses, and then again repair to the house to lay the cloth for dinner, and between whiles to milk the cows a second time, feed dogs, and litter down some eight hunters: all this fell to the share of the long-suffering fellow whom Mr. Elwes called his huntsman.

Always fond of riding and outdoor sports, Mr. Elwes conducted these pastimes in the most economical manner, riding on the roads least hampered by turnpikes, and stopping now and then by the wayside to give his horse a cheap feed on grass under the hedge, while his master munched the bit of bread or the hard egg he alone allowed himself for dinner.

As years went by his miserliness increased; not even his having a seat in Parliament led him to wear better clothes or keep a more liberal establishment: he seems to have bought one suit for the occasion, and one wig (the wearing of which was a necessity in those days); when the suit wore out he never replaced it, and when the wig no longer held together he picked one up which a beggar had thrown into a ditch and wore that!

He seems to have taken a mild sort of pleasure in those days of parliamentary life, and to have regretted their departure: he certainly had no home comforts to fall back upon, despite his riches.

His residence outside had the deplorable aspect of a house to let, which no one cares to keep in order; inside it was a desert. Broken windows were patched with brown-paper; to save fire he would sit in an old greenhouse, or in the kitchen with his one servant; and for occupation he diverted himself with collecting scraps of old rubbish, destined to feed his fire when he indulged himself with that luxury.

When his old servant died, and the fox-hounds were given up, and his horses dwindled down into a couple of worn-out mares, his life must indeed have been destitute of interest.

And yet this man possessed two splendid estates, and a fortune sufficient to live like a prince.

Friends fared badly with him, as may be imagined. When any rode over to visit him, and the boy in

charge of the stables was so lavish as to put a little hay before the stranger's horse, Mr. Elwes would steal into the stall and carry off the dainty before the poor creature could begin on it. His own food was strictly confined to the produce of his manors, since he would have starved sooner than buy anything. Once he dined on a moor-hen that a rat had caught and partly devoured, and at all times he ate meat and fish which had been kept so long that it was only fit to throw away. All his powers now seemed to have centred themselves on the amassing of money, without a thought as to the use of it, or a glimmering of the fact that he was rapidly growing old and could not carry it out of the world with him.

As is frequently the case with misers, his riches were now his torment; at one time he would imagine himself in danger of dying a pauper, at another he would seem to realize his wealth and dread being robbed of it. He frequently wrapped up small sums of money and hid them about the house, rising in the night in deep anxiety to see if they were safe.

In the last year of his life he would certainly have gone about almost destitute of clothing, if his man of business had not provided him with a coat, which the poor miser supposed to be a gift.

His last hours were clouded by his fears for his beloved gold. At midnight he was heard as if struggling with some one in his chamber and crying out, 'I will keep my money! I will! no one shall rob me of my property!' At length, in November 1789, this miserable rich man expired. The mania for saving which possessed him seems to have been inherited, since his mother, as well as his uncle, died misers, while possessed of large funds.

The story of this wasted life is sufficient to convince the poorest amongst us that money alone will not furnish happiness. Some men do well to save, but the duty of the wealthy is to spend, and to spend in such wise that their money may benefit their fellow-creatures. H. A. F.

THE ACCURATE BOY.

THERE was a young man once in the office of a railway superintendent. He was in a situation that four hundred boys in that city would have wished to get. It was honourable, and 'it paid well,' besides being in the line of promotion. How did he get it? Not by having a rich father, for he was the son of a labourer. The secret was his accuracy. He began as an errand-boy, and did his work accurately. His leisure time he used in improving his writing and arithmetic. After a while he learned to telegraph. At each step his employer praised his accuracy, and relied on what he did because he had always found him right.

And it is thus in every occupation. The accurate boy is the favoured one. Those who employ men do not wish to have to keep a constant look-out, as though they were rogues or fools. If a carpenter must stand at his journeyman's elbow to be sure that his work is right, or if a cashier must run over his book-keeper's column, he might as well do the work himself as employ another to do it in that way; and it is very certain that the employer will get rid of such an inaccurate workman as soon as he can.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

'FAREWELL, my only child,' she said,
As she embraced her darling boy,
And kissed his golden, glossy head;
'Farewell, my only hope and joy.

I am too poor to keep thee here,
Or else thou never shouldst depart.
God's will be done! although a tear
Rise from my sad but patient heart.

I hear the whistle of the train,
I see its white smoke drawing nigh:
Farewell, though parting brings me pain,
We'll meet, dear Willie, by-and-by.'

He left his mother's door, and soon
He reached the city of his dreams,
Where all things in a cloudless noon
Seemed glittering with golden beams.

Week after week had passed away,
Bringing no tidings from her son;
Yet, hopeful-hearted, day by day,
She knelt and prayed, 'Thy will be done!'

And summers came, and summers fled,
Until five years had passed away;
Hope in her heart was nearly dead,
Still for her Willie she would pray.

She took a cottage far away—
She could not bear the olden scene—
Where she was sighing, day by day,
O'er joys and pleasures that had been.

The summer's sun was sinking low,
And twilight stealing o'er the hill,
When up the road, with footsteps slow,
There came a wanderer, faint and ill.

He rapped at Willie's mother's door,
And feebly asked to rest awhile;
'My limbs are weary, worn, and sore:
Since dawn I've travelled many a mile.'

'And have you been in London town?'
'Yes, my good dame, I know it well;
Its streets I've wandered up and down,
No food to eat, no place to dwell.

This very day, just five years past,
I left a mother kind and dear,
High in my hopes; but at the last,
A beggar I have wandered here.

In London I gave way to drink,
And every vice beneath the sky;
And now I wander till I sink,
To find my mother and to die.'

The woman rose, and in the light
Of sunset eyed him o'er and o'er;
She tried to speak, but with a shriek,
Shuddered and fell upon the floor.

She lived; thank God! her long-lost boy
A second, better life began;
She lived to hear her son so dear
Hailed as a good and godly man,

"The woman rose, and in the light
Of sunset eyed him o'er and o'er."

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Chatterbox.

William receiving the Cross of the Legion of Honour.

THE TWO OLD FRIENDS.

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

(*Concluded from page* 195.)

THEN could the doctor no longer restrain his joy and his amazement. He threw himself on the young man's neck, and with tears of emotion pressed him to his heart. Then he raised his eyes upwards and blessed God, Who by His mysterious ways had permitted him to cure a sick woman, and to help her son out of a hopeless position, in order thus to prepare for himself this happiness which now fell to his share. After this embrace he seized the young man's hand, and exclaimed,—

'Come, come, let us take this good news to my wife and my son. How they will be beside themselves with joy!'

But William Hoofs drew back and said, 'Doctor! grant me a few more minutes and hear me patiently. I place no conditions before you, but at the same time I have one request to make of you. My mother will now be quite alone.'

'Ah! I have already thought of your mother!' M. Christiaans interrupted him. 'You will not accept any money, but——'

'She would equally refuse it—at least if you offer it to her as the reward of my present action.'

'She would refuse it!' repeated the doctor, in amazement. 'What strange people you are! She is poor—is she not? On what can she live?'

'I had 300 francs which I had saved by working after time to pay off my debt to you . . . No, I implore you, sir, let me speak, and do not interrupt me. This money, which I can no longer offer you, will last for some time to supply her needs. She can still work a little. My request is of another kind. My mother will now be too much alone; she will be thinking of me day and night. This fills me with fear on her account. What I ask of you is, that you would from time to time, on any occasion when it is possible for you, go and visit her, giving her comfort and courage, speaking to her of me, as if I were certain to return.'

'Go on! go on!' exclaimed the doctor, with a smile on his lips. 'Is that all?'

'Assure me, sir, that you will watch over my good mother. And if her strength should not suffice to allow her to earn enough to support herself, show yourself then her generous protector. Make me this promise, and I shall depart happily and in peace.'

'What!' exclaimed M. Christiaans; 'and this is all that the deliverer of my son ventures to ask of the doctor of Elsene? No, your mother shall not be alone; she shall not work; she shall never have to fear want. Henceforth your mother shall be as a beloved sister to me; she shall be one of my family; she shall live with us here; we will surround her with every care, and treat her with gratitude and love. Are you now content?'

William Hoofs took the doctor's hand, and held it to his lips.

M. Christiaans sprang to the door.

'Come now,' he said, 'you must see the happiness which you have brought to this house.'

'My secret! my secret!' exclaimed the young man.

'Do not be afraid; not a word shall be said about it.'

And he led William Hoofs into the room where his family were still sitting, lamenting in silent anguish.

'Praise God!' he exclaimed; 'Bernard is saved! He shall not be a soldier; here is his substitute. Do not doubt, our trouble is turned away from us. Instead of weeping over your departure, Bernard, we can now celebrate your happy marriage!'

On all sides cries of unspeakable joy greeted this announcement, while all faces gazed with amazement at the well-dressed young gentleman, who did not appear to them as at all belonging to the class of people who were ready to sell themselves.

'I understand your surprise, children,' said the doctor. 'Mr. William Hoofs is no ordinary substitute. I once restored his mother's health, and have been able to do otherwise some good to her and to him. Out of pure gratitude he now takes your place, Bernard. He declines to take any reward in money. Bless him for his generosity, and for this most kind action he has done for us!'

Bernard embraced the young man with the warmest affection. He called him his deliverer, his benefactor, his brother. Veronica and all the others joined in showing him every mark of gratitude. Thanksgivings arose to Heaven.

'Listen, children,' cried the doctor at last; 'our gratitude must not be shown merely by empty words. Good William Hoofs indeed refuses any reward, but we have still some means of paying him a little of our debt. He has an aged mother—a virtuous and noble-hearted woman. What troubles him now is, that his mother should be left quite alone, and might pine away in her dreary solitude. I have promised him that his mother shall live here with us, and that we will love her as a member of our family.'

'Yes, yes! that we will!' they all exclaimed. 'We will do all in our power to make her life happy.'

'She shall be as a sister to me,' said Mrs. Christiaans.

'I will love her as a second mother,' added Catherine.

'Oh! let her come and live with us at the beautiful country-house of Boerdale,' cried Veronica.

'No, no,' said the doctor; 'she requires a companion of her own age. My good wife shall chat with her, walk about with her, and protect her from all that can grieve her. Our best and brightest room is at the eastern side of our house, looking into the court. There the mother of our deliverer shall sleep. May she always be loved and honoured by us more than any other member of our family!

William Hoofs stood in the middle of the room, unable to repress his tears of joy and emotion. How was this? He meant only to fulfil a duty, and now this deed of his was to make the days of his mother happy and comfortable, far beyond his brightest hopes! At last he said,—

'I must leave you to go and fetch some papers which are deposited at the Town Hall. Make yourselves quite certain that at the appointed hour to-morrow I shall appear before the Council of Revision as substitute for Bernard Christiaans. Farewell, then, till to-morrow, doctor!'

All vied with each other in their repeated thanks.

'Ah! you over-estimate my sacrifice!' replied he, 'I am the happiest of you all.'

Mrs. Christiaans called after him,—

'Mr. William! tell your good mother that I shall come and fetch her almost immediately in the doctor's carriage! She shall spend this evening with us all, and thus make the acquaintance of her new friends and her new home.'

'Thank you! thank you!' cried the young man, in a voice choking with emotion, as he went out of the room.

Next morning he appeared before the Council of Revision: he was accepted, and went off to the army. He remained many years in the service, and rose to be an officer; and for the valour which he displayed in a great battle he received the Cross of the Legion of Honour.

That God rewards noble deeds and often grants long life to the generous and benevolent, is proved by the fact that some forty years after, in a suburb of Brussels, two old men used to be seen every fine afternoon walking, arm in arm, slowly along a sunny promenade. Both were dressed as well-to-do citizens. One was quite ninety years of age; he walked feebly, and was deeply bent down; his cheeks were pale and sunken. Notwithstanding the warm weather he wore a thick cloak with a cape; he leant one hand on the silver knob of a walking-stick, the other he passed under his friend's arm. He, too, had snow-white hair and a thin, wrinkled face; he looked about seventy, but he held his head erect, and all his movements showed that he had still a good deal of strength and energy left. He wore a blue frock-coat, buttoned up to the chin, and on his left breast might be seen the ribbon of the Legion of Honour. These men went by the name of 'the two old friends.' They were constantly together, and were well known in that part of town. The elder was M. Christiaans, the good doctor of Elsene; the younger was Colonel William Hoofs. The bond which so closely united them was the sweet and sacred tie of gratitude.

'MY DOLLS.'

A little girl's description of her dolls to a play-fellow.

SO you have four? I have but three—
Jane, and Rosy, and Margery.
Jane, my eldest, is not good,
She never does the thing that she should.
Sulky! if I do not take her to play,
She will lie and pout the live-long day.
Selfish! the others may cry, or call,
Or cut their fingers, or have a bad fall,
She never hurries herself—not she!
A selfisher doll there could not be.
I was angry once, and hastily said,
'I should not care, Jane, if you were dead!'
It did not trouble her selfish head,
Though mother called out, 'Oh, darling! don't say
Hard things to your dolls—not even in play!'
So I do try to love her, but ah! all in vain;
A cold-hearted child is my eldest Jane.

Then comes a darling, my pretty Rose,
But oh! so vain, so fond of fine clothes!
'Where did she learn it?' I'm sure not of me,
My things are as plain as plain can be.
She would be always in red, pink, or blue;
I tell her, of course, that would never do.
But I often make her as smart as I can,
It pleases her so: 'tis a very bad plan,
For if one of her uncles chance to see
Miss Rose in her gayest finery,
He is sure to set her up in a tree,
Or tie her to Rover, or leave her to swing.
She takes it all patiently, dear little thing!
But for that one fault, which all the house knows,
She would simply be perfect, my dear little Rose!

Then comes the youngest, the pet of the three—
My baby, my blue-eyed Margery;
Sweet waxen hands, small and so fair,
Real eyelashes, eyebrows, and soft golden hair.
She is in long clothes, and morning and night
To dress and undress her is such a delight!
Father's so funny! 'I'm grudging,' said he,
'So many kisses to Margery:
I only get them by twos and by threes.'
'Dear father,' I said, 'you can ask when you please;
She cannot speak, she is weak and so small,
Of course I must love her the best of all.'
Hark! she is waking, so now you shall see
My baby, my blue-eyed Margery!

A*.

THE YOUNG PAINTER.

IT is related of the sculptor Banks, that one day he was waited upon by a little boy with some drawings in his hand.

'What do you want with me?' said Banks.

'I want to be an artist, sir,' was the reply.

'But I'm a sculptor.'

'I know that, sir; but I want your permission to attend the drawing-classes at the Royal Academy.'

The sculptor told the lad that he had not the power to give him the permission, but he said that he would look at the drawings which the lad had brought with him. These were timidly displayed, for, notwithstanding his seeming boldness, the lad was really very shy. But the sculptor had a kind heart. Examining the sketches he said, 'Well done, my little man! but you must learn to do better. Go home and try your pencil again at this Apollo.'

The boy did so. For upwards of a month he diligently toiled at the sketch, on the completion of which he again presented himself before the sculptor.

The Sculptor and the young Painter.

'Bravo!' cried Banks. 'This is better: but you must study it again.'

The boy was not discouraged. He did not become impatient or discontented because Banks found fault with his sketch. Nothing of the kind. He returned home, applied himself with redoubled diligence to the correction of the errors which had been pointed out to him in the drawing, and in a week's time again stood before Banks. This time the sculptor found few errors in the sketch; but told the young student that he would have to labour long and hard before he could win a name as an artist.

'Never mind,' said the boy, proudly drawing himself up, 'I'll do it!'

And he *did* so; with what success let the fame of Mulready reply.

MACARONI EATING.

WE who sit decorously at table in England and eat macaroni cut into small pieces and arranged to our liking, have no notion how differently matters are managed in the real macaroni country. This picture will give the best idea of the performance, more clever than graceful, of the gradual drawing into the mouth of the long strings of macaroni. As usual the feast takes place out-of-doors, for who would be indoors that could help it in Italy? Macaroni is the greatest treat possible to the Italian peasant, whose ordinary food is coarse, unleavened bread, and raw turnips, or some such root, varied by oranges when in season, and washed down by the rough wine of the district.

H. A. F.

THE SISTERS.

CHAPTER I.—LILIAN'S JOURNAL.

'*Kirkton, N. B., Sept.* 23.

AM going to write a journal!—at least, not exactly a journal, because that is so dull! I've seen what some girls write since I have been down here!

'Their journals are like this:—

'"*The Priory, July* 2.—A little rain. Rose at 6.30. Read history before breakfast. Lessons in the morning. Practised two hours. After dinner rode our ponies—went to call at Kirkton—saw Mrs. M'Gregor and Helena St. Aubyn. Did wool-work in the evening."

'Is not that dull? My journal is not going to be like that. But Mrs. Nugent said, when I was laughing about this in the school-room the other day, that writing a diary even of that kind is useful to us; something, she says, to make us "regular in our habits!" She said, too, the other day, that keeping a journal would make us diligent; because we should be so ashamed at the end of the day to put down that we had done so little. I'm afraid that I shouldn't be ashamed at all. I'm going to put down anything that comes into my head.

'My name is Lilian Mary St. Aubyn, and I am fifteen years old. Ought to be wiser, I suppose; but, though I know a great many more things, I don't think I'm much wiser than I was when I was eleven. But I'm much happier. I'm not like the same girl; I can never be quite unhappy now again, I think, unless I do something very wrong. I shall write as if I was writing to somebody; that will be more amusing.

'I am staying with my grandmother in Scotland—Mrs. M'Gregor her name is—such a darling old grandmother! This isn't the first time I've been here—but the second. The first time I stayed a whole year! but I'm only come for three months now. I see what I am doing. Instead of a journal, I am writing a sort of history of myself. Much more amusing than a journal! I shall call it "journal," though.

'I have two sisters and one brother. He is not a very good boy; people say we gave him his own way too much when he was little, and he is a trouble to Aunt Margaret and grandfather. But perhaps he will be better some day. My eldest sister has a long name,—"Helena Margaret Constance Victorine!" I've heard of victorines—fur things that people used to wear—and Helena is like fur; she is so soft, and loving, and comforting! What rubbish I'm writing! She is seventeen. My youngest sister is thirteen, and her name is "Mabel Elizabeth." Elizabeth sounds dreadfully strong-minded—doesn't it? One always thinks of Queen Elizabeth,—but Mab will never be strong-minded—never!

'Bernard Constantine is my brother's name, and he is ten. And now I must describe them!—but there's only one worth describing, and that's Helena. I had not seen her for a year and a half when I came this time; and the first evening I could do nothing but look at her. She was so altered, and seemed so far beyond me in everything—though she always has been beyond me for the matter of that! Only I had begun to fancy myself a little bit grown up, and Aunt Margaret had put me into longer dresses, and I thought Helena would see that the year and a half had made a great difference in me. But when I came there was Helena, looking quite grown up! There were her fair curls, which she used to wear in a short crop all round her head, drawn up into a knot at the back; and she had on a blue silk dress with a long train, and a beautiful pearl necklace. She does not look as if she could even say anything silly; and yet she isn't a bit prim. She is very tall and slight. I wish I could paint well enough to paint her. And now for me! I'm short and thin, with black eyes! I think I'm like a crow! long black hair—and the question, What am I to do with my hair? is now become a serious one to poor me. It is so ugly, and so much in my way! I wish they would let me have it all cut off! I came here with curls, but Helena's maid has coiled it all up for me, and bound it round with a scarlet ribbon! The worst of this is, I shall never be able to do it for myself! Well, that's enough about me! Then there's Mab! She's fair, like Helena, but not one quarter so pretty! Then Bernard! well, he is rather a fat boy of ten years old, and horribly naughty! He's gone to Eton now: and I can't fancy how he will get on, for he's not a bit like our brave father, I should think. Helena tells me a great deal about him.

'This Kirkton is a lovely place. A grand old house, that has been in the M'Gregor family for years and years. And it has an old-fashioned garden round it, with terraces and grass slopes, and shady corners. There are plenty of trees just here. But, without riding or walking very far, you can get upon the open heath, where there is hardly a tree to be seen.

'There is a girl here, one year older than Helena. I don't think she would like my calling her a girl, though, for she looks upon me as a child. Her name is Kate Ramsay, and she is the clergyman's daughter. Mr. Ramsay is our clergyman here. There are only a few families living round about. There is no church near, so grandmother asked the bishop to send a clergyman here: and, as Kirkton is such a large house, grandmother gave up a room to be used for the services, and promised that a little church should soon be built. And so Mr. Ramsay came here from Edinburgh. Mr. Ramsay has a little house called Ivor Cottage outside the park at Kirkton, and Kate lives with him, of course. He has one other daughter, but she has a spinal complaint, and is always lying down. Her name is Janet, and she is quite old to all of us. She is twenty. Still that only makes her two years older than Kate. But then twenty sounds so old! We hardly ever see her, for Kate says she does not care for society; and if we go there she always takes us straight out on the lawn to play croquet, or to see her pets, or something! I like the look of Janet, though! And she talks gently and pleasantly, and smiles at us so sweetly! Sometimes I think she would like us to stay and talk to her more than we do: and once or twice, we have tried to speak to her, but Kate has hurried us away. Kate always says it does

her sister harm to be excited, and that the doctor says she is to be kept very quiet.'

CHAPTER II.—JANET AND KATE.

In a tiny sitting-room at Ivor Cottage a bright fire was burning, and tea was spread on a table drawn up near the hearth. Two girls were in the room. Two girls, so unlike that no one could have guessed them to be sisters. One was sitting at the table in a listless attitude, with a discontented look on her face. She was short and stout, with black eyes and hair, and a rosy complexion; it was evident something had happened which annoyed her. The other girl was lying on a couch on the opposite side of the fire. Tall, fair, and slight, with blue eyes and brown hair, she was a great contrast to her sister.

The girls were the daughters of the clergyman, Mr. Ramsay, and lived with their father (their mother having been dead many years) at Ivor Cottage. Janet, the girl on the couch, was smiling. She had not been looking at her sister, and so she had not noticed her gloomy face. She said,—

'You are silent, Kitty. Haven't you anything to tell me of the doings up at the great house?'

'What makes you so happy?' Kate said, impatiently: 'I should get weary to death if I had to mope on the sofa all day. I do believe you like it.'

'I have to like it at present,' said Janet, quietly. 'Something has vexed you, Kate. You must tell me what it is.'

'Oh! it's nothing,' said Kate, with a frown; 'at least, nothing you would care about. It's only that I'm very shabby, not fit to visit at Mrs. M'Gregor's at all, or to go out with Helena. She is going out a great deal more now; and I expect they'll have more company there this winter, if she is at home, than they have ever had before; and they often ask me there, and like me to go out with her, because, of course, that ugly little sister of hers, who is come to stay there, is much too young; and how I'm ever to go out, with such dresses as I have'—and she looked down at her neat dark alpaca—'and only one wretched white evening dress, is more than I can tell!'

'Stop, stop, Kate!' said Janet. 'Don't talk like this, dear; we must dress according to our means and station in life. But you shall have everything that can possibly be got for you. You can't suppose I shouldn't care!' she added, with a look of pain.

'No, no! I know you care for me more than I deserve,' cried Kate, in sudden penitence, coming to the sofa, and kneeling down by her sister.

'Then look here, dearie; I've been thinking,' said Janet, 'about all these things, and though I don't agree that you are very shabby, still I think you want one or two new things, and I am going to Edinburgh next week, and you will come with me and choose them there.'

'To Edinburgh!' cried Kate, all amazement. 'What do you mean? And the money? Where is that?'

'I mean what I say, dear,' said Janet, with a quiet smile; 'but don't ask me too many questions at once. I have a little money for you. I am going to Edinburgh to be under the care of Dr. Fergusson for the winter, and I hope to be able to walk about as I used to do when I come home in the spring. Don't interrupt me,' she said, as she noticed Kate's sudden start, 'I have more to say. I don't think you ought to call that bright-looking little sister of Helena's ugly. I don't think you ought to go out to all the parties Helena will go to, even should you be asked. We haven't the means for it. Think of dear father and his self-denying life! There, now I've answered your questions, and given a lecture, all in a hurry, and now do go and call father to tea. He would forget all about meals if it were not for us.'

'But, Janet, I don't understand you. I thought you had a spinal complaint, which could not be cured! I'm sure I've told people so.'

'Have you?' said Janet, a shade of pain at her sister's careless manner and words passing over her face. Kate noticed it.

'Oh, forgive me, Janet! How cruel I am! I think I have only said so to the St. Aubyn girls. But I really didn't know.'

'You have never asked me much about myself since you came from school,' said Janet. 'Did it never strike you as rather surprising when you came back a year and a half ago, after four years' absence in England, to find the sister you had left strong and well as yourself hardly able to walk a step?'

'Well, but,' said Kate, 'I thought being thrown out of a pony-carriage had injured your spine.'

'The doctors all said at the time I should recover if I would have patience to bear the needful rest. And I have tried,' she said, 'irksome as it has seemed at times; but my two years lying by is more than over now, and I have only been waiting for some money to go to Dr. Fergusson to be put to rights again, I hope. Father and I have never said much about this, you know, because we so feared it might be a false hope, and that I was to be an invalid for life. Last week, while you were away, Dr. Fergusson was near here, and came to see me, and he says what I have fancied all along, that, with the blessing of God, he thinks he shall restore me. And he was so glad to hear I could come to be under his care this winter.'

Here Janet stopped, as if she expected Kate to say something to her—something hopeful, something loving; but she waited in vain. There was a curious mixture of feelings in Kate's mind as she listened to her sister. Surprise was the first feeling that came, and then—yes, it was no good trying to deceive herself—dismay. She was not glad that her sister was likely to be restored to active life, and she was horrified with herself on discovering this, and she felt herself very wicked; yet she did not try to crush down the feeling, as she might have done, but she allowed herself to dwell upon what she saw would be the loss to herself of Janet returned to her rightful place, in her home and in society. But all this requires a little explanation.

(To be continued.)

Janet and Kate.

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Chatterbox.

Miss Ramsay and her Brother.

THE SISTERS.

(*Continued from page* 207.)

MR. RAMSAY was a shy, studious man. He had married rather late in life, and had been most tenderly devoted to his wife, who died when his second daughter, Kate, was about two years old. Left a widower with two little girls, he shut himself up alone with his books and his great sorrow, and it seemed at first as if it would fare badly with the two motherless babes, in the lonely house in Edinburgh, left in the charge of a careless servant, rarely noticed by their father, who, in his first grief, could not bear the sight of anything that brought his wife vividly to his remembrance.

But help came to them; though it was not, at first, agreeable help to any of the household.

Mr. Ramsay had one sister, older than himself, who had never much approved of her brother's marrying a young English girl. She lived a long way from Edinburgh, with an old friend of hers. But the old friend died about a year after the death of Andrew Ramsay's wife, and the thoughts of the solitary woman turned to her only brother, and she wondered if the little children, her only near kindred, had any one to look after them besides their father; and she thought, if he was their only guardian, the children would never be properly cared for. So, just writing to say she was coming to pay a week's visit, she journeyed to Edinburgh.

She found matters as bad as she had expected. Her brother in his study all day, except when he went to church or to visit the sick; careless, wasteful servants; two little girls in shabby mourning, with untidy hair, running all over the house, only shut out from one room, their father's study—wild, uncared-for children!

Miss Ramsay stayed in the house two days, saying little, but observing much; her grim looks scaring the children and frightening the servants; and at the end of the second day she went to her brother's study, saying she wished to speak to him.

He looked up at her from his books, and asked if anything was the matter.

'Matter? yes, I should think there was! But you always were a bookworm, Andrew; and you always will be, I suppose, to the end of the chapter. But we shall all have to give an account, you know. You were never a man for children, but if you have them they must be tended.'

'Are the children——' he began, rather timidly.

'The children *are* just everything they ought not to be, Andrew; and I'm only thankful I came in time, before they were older—that is, if you will give up the management to me now. The children don't look a bit like gentlemen's children.'

'Mary! Mary!' cried the poor man; 'what do you mean?'

He was so unused to his sister's rough way of enforcing home truths, and she was such a contrast to his sweet, gentle wife, that he felt as if an earthquake had suddenly shaken his house to its foundations. And it was an earthquake; for Miss Ramsay gained her point, and before the week of her proposed visit came to an end the dishonest, careless servants were dismissed, two tidy maids engaged, the house cleaned from top to bottom, and the children were neatly dressed.

Andrew Ramsay could not but feel it was more comfortable. Every now and then, after his sister had been with him some weeks, he would creep out of his study in the evenings to sit with her in the now cosy parlour. After the first evening or two she always sent for the children when he came in. He took hardly any notice of them at first; but the sister persevered, trying to bring the little things under his notice. And at last she succeeded. The manners of the little ones improved; they grew more winning under her care; though she was not loving by nature, she was always kind to them.

For some years all went on peacefully enough in the little household, until Janet was about fourteen, and Kate twelve years old, when Miss Ramsay died. The education of the two girls had been left to her, and with the help of one or two masters she had carried it on, so far, fairly well. But the girls were very young, and after six months spent in trying to get on with their studies without their aunt's help, Janet asked their father if he could afford to send one of them, at any rate, to school. He said it would be difficult, and he should have to pinch a great deal, but if Janet thought it ought to be, he must afford it; and then he sighed as he added he supposed it ought to be Janet to go. Kate never could have such a place in her father's heart as Janet, though he never failed in loving tenderness to her. But, no! Janet would not go—she insisted that it must be Kate, though in her inmost heart she longed for the advantages of a good school. And then, where was Kate to go? To England was Mr. Ramsay's decision, greatly to the surprise of his Edinburgh friends, who thought that to send a girl so far, poor as he was, was an act little short of madness.

But Mr. Ramsay had always before his eyes the sweet face and gentle ways of his young English wife, and he desired that his daughters should be like her. Janet often reminded him of her dead mother; but Kate—never! If Kate could have an English education, it might soften down her roughness, improve her manners and her temper at the same time, and make her more pleasant and less selfish.

And accordingly to England Kate went. An elderly relative of Mr. Ramsay's dying just at this time, and leaving the poor clergyman a little money, he determined to devote it to his daughters' education; and while he sent Kate to a first-rate school near London, Janet stayed at home, and became a daily pupil of Mrs. Ellcourt, a lady living in Edinburgh.

Mrs. Ellcourt never took more than six pupils, so that Janet had not many companions; but the school was a pleasant break in her somewhat dull life, and gave her some friends of her own age.

One morning at breakfast, a few months after Kate's departure, Janet noticed that Mr. Ramsay

read one of his letters several times. They seldom had any letters of interest, excepting from the absent Kate; but Janet had seen that this one was not in her handwriting. At length she ventured somewhat timidly—for there was something in her father's face which she could not understand—to ask if he had had any news.

'Well, I suppose I have,' he said, with a short laugh; 'but I can't make up my mind whether it is good news or bad news exactly, and I can't tell you till I have made up my mind. I suppose, on the whole, it is good news though.'

'Oh, dear father, what is it?'

'Well, I'll just tell you what I've heard. This is a letter asking me to go and be the clergyman at Kirkton, where Mrs. M'Gregor is going to build a new church. They will give me three hundred a-year: and there is a small house in the village, belonging to the M'Gregors, in which I am to live rent free, with a little garden, Janet! a luxury you have never had before.' Here Mr. Ramsay paused, as if waiting for some answer from Janet.

'And who are the M'Gregors, father?'

'They are very wealthy people, owners of a great estate, my dear, and nearly the whole of Kirkton belongs to them. And they are more than that; they are, I believe, very good people too.'

'Father, it sounds all very pleasant; but the only thing ——' and here Janet paused.

'The only thing, my darling! yes, tell me what that is?' said Mr. Ramsay.

'It seems so selfish; because, if you don't mind leaving Edinburgh, I am sure I ought not to care.'

'Mind leaving Edinburgh!' echoed her father, in some surprise. 'Has life been so bright to you here, then, Janet?' And he looked round on the scantily furnished room, and then at the anxious face of his daughter.

'Dear father, it is my home. I have never known any other.'

'I am reproved, Janet: I forget the difference between your age and mine. I have known other homes; and this one is saddened to me by the recollection of what I lost here.'

'Father dear,' said Janet, tears fast dropping from her eyes, 'I never thought—I did not know your thought——'

Her father interrupted her: 'Don't vex yourself, my child. No one can tell what you have been to me these last few years. You have been more to me than a child—companion, friend! . . . No, don't interrupt me, dear. And yet, if I go to Kirkton, I shall part with you.'

'Part with me, father?' cried Janet.

'Yes, my dear. You are not yet fifteen, and I do not intend to take you away from school yet. Your education is a very important thing to you; it may be all-important to you in your future life; and if I leave Edinburgh you must stay with Mrs. Ellcourt, for some time certainly, as a pupil. I have confidence in her, and I know you like her, and are happy at school there.'

'Oh!' cried Janet, 'how terrible to be separated from you!'

'Not more terrible for you than for me, Janet; but it is a separation which we must certainly make up our minds to bear, if I leave Edinburgh. Don't say any more now. When I have come to some determination you can talk it all over with Mrs. Ellcourt, and you will see, I think, that she will entirely agree with me. I shall be a richer man than I am now if I go to Kirkton; and I *certainly* shall spare enough money to enable my daughters to finish their education properly.'

Here the father and daughter were interrupted by the entrance of a servant with a message to Mr. Ramsay, and Janet was left to her own thoughts. In the evening, when they met again, Janet had made up her mind that the separation between herself and her father must be for a time, and she begged him to go to Kirkton, as she felt sure it would be for his advantage in many ways.

'Never mind advantage!' said Mr. Ramsay; 'the only question is whether it is right or not. And are you willing to stay with kind Mrs. Ellcourt, Janet?'

'Yes, for a time, if you can get on without me.'

Mr. Ramsay soon took his departure for Kirkton, feeling when he turned his back on Edinburgh as if the world had suddenly become very cold and dark, and nearly all the sunshine had died out of his life.

(To be continued.)

THE YOUNG MAN OF PRINCIPLE.

A YOUNG man was in a position where his employers required him to make a false statement, by which several hundred dollars which did not belong to them would come into their hands. All depended upon this clerk's serving their purpose. To their great vexation, he utterly refused to do so. He could not be tempted to sell his conscience for any one's favour, and so he was discharged from his place.

Not long after, he applied for a vacant situation, and the gentleman, being pleased with his address, asked him for any good reference he might have.

The young man felt that his character was unsullied, and so fearlessly referred him to his last employer.

'I have just been dismissed from his service, and you can inquire of him about me.'

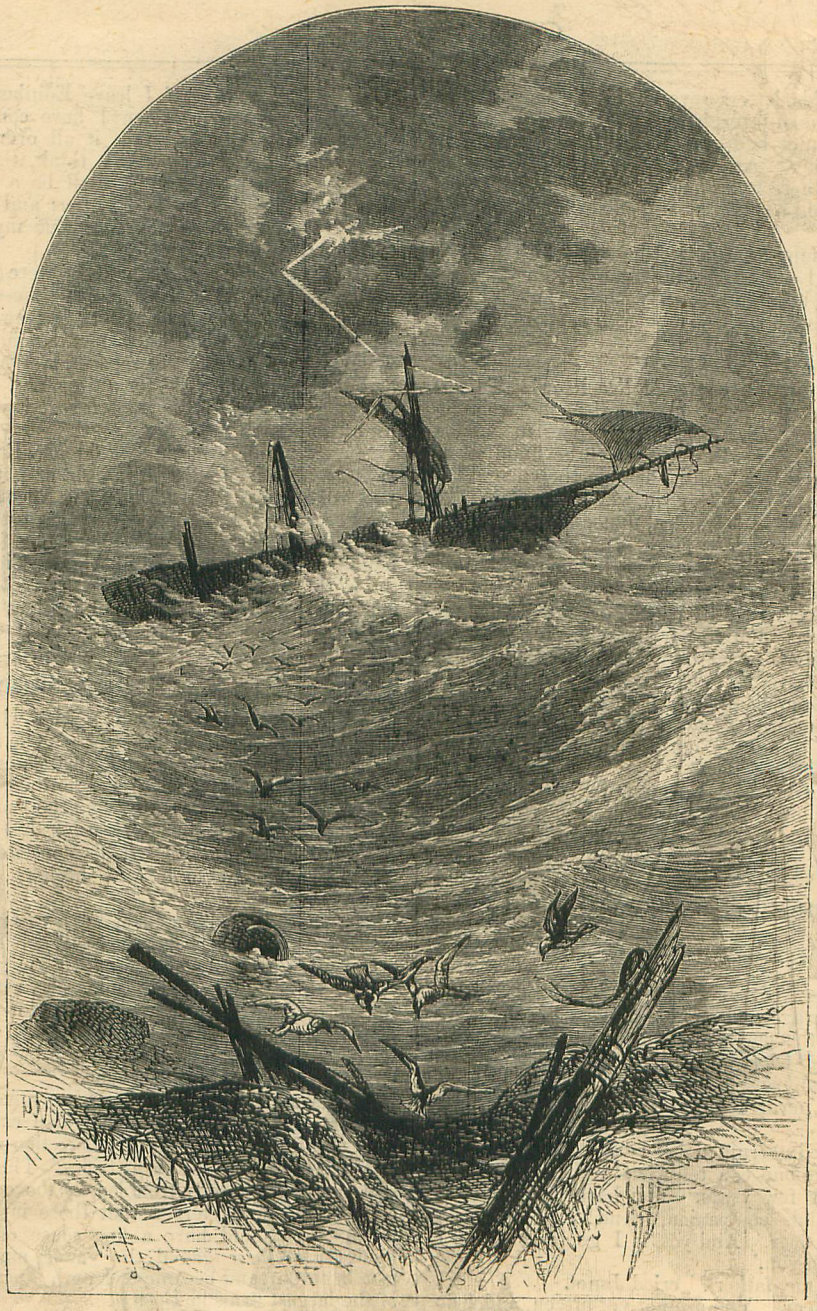
It was a new fashion of getting a young man's recommendation, but the gentleman called on the firm, and found that the only objection was that he was 'too conscientious about trifles.' The gentleman had not been greatly troubled by too conscientious clerks, and he preferred that those intrusted with his money should have a fine sense of truth and honesty, so he engaged the young man, who rose fast in favour, and became at length a partner in one of the largest firms in Boston.

'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.' Even unscrupulous men know the worth of good principles that cannot be moved.

A gentleman turned off a man in his employ at the bank because he refused to write for him on the Sunday. When asked afterwards to name some reliable person as suitable for a cashier in another bank, he mentioned this same man.

'You can depend upon him,' he said, 'for he refused to work for me on Sundays.'

MRS. J. E. M'CONAUGHY.



TWO VOYAGES.

By the Author of 'Earth's Many Voices.'

A SHIP sailed out to sea
With favouring wind and favouring tide;
A fair, and a noble ship was she
In all her pride.
A storm fell over the sea,
Before she could gain her sheltering port:
A sad, and a helpless wreck lay she,
Her glory nought.

'The waves of this troublesome world,'
So stormily often they rage and swell,
Full many a soul to its death they have hurled
That started well.
Oh! pray for the ship so fair,
That starts in her pride for the ocean's strife;
And find, oh find, for the soul a prayer,
That starts with never a fear nor care
For the voyage of life.

James Watt.

JAMES WATT.

JAMES WATT was born at Greenock, in Scotland, in September 1736, and began life as a mathematical instrument maker, in which trade he was employed by the University of Glasgow; and in this city he afterwards lived.

He shortly after turned his attention to the steam-engine and its manufacture, which from a boy upwards had engaged so much of his wonder and curiosity. In it he made many improvements.

He then entered into business as a civil engineer, planning and surveying canals; and to aid him in doing so he invented many new instruments, and a machine for drawing in perspective.

In 1774 he removed from Glasgow to Soho, near Birmingham, where he entered into partnership with a Mr. Boulton, in the business of building steam-engines. The many improvements suggested and carried out in their manufacture by James Watt himself, caused the firm to grow into importance: *for steam, in* all sorts of ways, was now beginning to be applied.

In after years, what would our steam-boats, our railways, our steam-presses have been, but for James Watt and his mechanical ingenuity?

This fact teaches boys, when they read about James Watt and his useful career, how they may become great; for when a little boy he watched the steam coming out of the spout of the tea-kettle, and lifting the lid, he thought earnestly how it could be, and what a power that steam might become if properly controlled; and it was chiefly this little incident, and his persevering character, that led him to improve by study the mechanical genius he possessed.

James Watt, as a boy, was always thinking out his problems, and by sketches and calculations working steadily in a way that led to the important after-results.

After a long and successful business career, Mr. Watt retired from business with a handsome fortune, which enabled him to enjoy the evening of a well-spent life with ease and comfort in the bosom of his family. He died in 1819, in the seventy-third year of his age.

THE REPUTED MISER.

From the Italian of A. Rouna.

THE inundation of the Po, the overflowing of other rivers, together with a dreadful storm, had completely desolated Lombardy. The bishops, by pastoral letters, and by their own personal example, urged the rich to help the sufferers, and the priests went about from house to house asking for aid.

The priest of San Babila, who was my uncle on my mother's side, and with whom at that time I was staying, took me with him one day when he happened to be going to his parishioners' houses on this pious errand. The venerable appearance and eloquent pleading of this excellent man did wonders. Every one gave something, and gave it with words that rendered the gift doubly precious.

It was getting dark, and we were just thinking of going home, when we heard a violent cough sounding from a window on the ground-floor. My uncle stopped, and after listening for a moment or two, said,—

'That is the Cavaliere Briccioli's cough; I saw him yesterday.' Then, shrugging his shoulders, he continued: 'There is nothing to be got out of him, however, though they do say he is immensely wealthy.'

'Is this the gentleman,' I asked, 'who with torn clothes and patched boots travels always on the box with the drivers, in order to pay less for his journey?'

'The same,' answered my uncle. 'After all,' he added, as though in answer to some argument he had been carrying on in his own mind, 'after all, even if he give me only tenpence it will be still tenpence more.'

As he spoke he turned back, entered the gate, and asked the porter how the cavaliere was.

'He is in bed, your reverence,' said the man: 'he has not been seen to-day. Ah! he won't live long with that cough of his!'

'Alas, poor man! I am sorry to hear it!'

'Poor man, indeed!' cried the porter. 'He has plenty of money, and yet he is so miserly he will have neither doctor nor medicine.'

We went on without attending to the porter's grumbling, and soon came to the cavaliere's door. After tapping once or twice we walked in. The hall lamp threw a glimmer of light into a little anteroom, leading to another room slightly larger, which the cavaliere asked us to enter. He begged us to excuse his being without a light, saying,—

'When one does nothing but cough and doze it is not necessary. Your pardon, sir,' he continued, 'I am looking for a match. It was upon the mantelpiece. Ah, here it is!'

Bending down he lit the match from some smouldering ashes, and lighted a small bit of candle. I could scarcely keep from laughing. It was lucky for me that it was dark, and that a violent fit of coughing caused by the fumes of the sulphur prevented him, as I thought, from perceiving my amusement.

'Sit down, gentlemen,' said he, when he was able to speak. 'Tell me what I can do for you, Don Tomaso.'

My uncle brought forward his most convincing arguments, and the cavaliere listened with downcast eyes, coughing every now and again. Then raising his head he cried,—

'Alas! what a great deal of misery there is in the world! One ought to have the treasures of Crœsus to do anything to relieve it. I cannot. I am only a poor creature——'

My uncle saw that he was throwing soap and water away, as the saying goes, and therefore rose to take his leave.

'I am sorry, signor,' he said; 'very sorry.'

'Be good enough to seat yourself again,' said the cavaliere: 'at such a time I ought to do my part also.'

'Oh,' thought I, 'that won't be much—a farthing, or at most a few pence, wrung from a miser.' In the meanwhile the cavaliere opened a cupboard, and taking thence a heap of gold napoleons gave them to my uncle.

'This is all I have in the house,' he said. 'Last year I could have done more, but chance brought under my notice a poor family of exiles in Switzerland, who were in the lowest depths of poverty. Now, however, thank Heaven! they are provided for.'

Turning to me, the cavaliere put his hand on my shoulder, and added,—

'Young man, learn that, by going without matches and candles, one is sometimes able to do a little good to one's fellow-men.'

You may imagine how foolish I felt at this reproof, but the lesson was a wholesome one. We took our leave, wishing him a good night and better health, and he escorted us to the door, once more saying,—

'I am sorry I can do no more at this time.'

On my return to Pavia for the Christmas holidays I learnt that the cavaliere was dead, and that he had left numerous legacies for charitable purposes, among others an annual sum of 350*l.* to support eight penniless youths at the University of Pavia. His diary proved also that in every town which he had passed through, he had done good to those poor folk whom Providence had brought near to him. He had encouraged merit when adverse circumstances had prevented it from making its way in the world. He had ordered pictures, statues, and drawings, and after paying liberally for them, had bequeathed them to needy artists. He had always been doing good in secret. Miserly he had been for himself, but not so for others, and though on account of his old clothes he was often despised while he lived, after death his name was blessed by hundreds.

CARLO VITI.

GAS.

GAS, as most people know, is inflammable air given out by coal. But who first thought of collecting it and storing it, and using it to light up streets, and houses, and churches? The honour is due to a very busy, hard-working engineer, one William Murdoch, the foreman of Messrs. Boulton and Watt, the great engineers. It was when his real day's work was over that he devoted himself to experiments on the nature and use of coal gas, and at last he brought the discovery into such shape that he lighted his own house and offices with the new combustible air; and even contrived a lantern, with a bladder of gas fixed to it, to light him along the dark lanes of the country at night. This was at the close of the last century, and great was the amazement of the public when the clever foreman decorated his masters' mills, near Birmingham, with a blaze of light in celebration of the peace of Amiens in 1802.

So little was the invention understood and believed in by those who had not seen it in force, that even great and wise men laughed at the idea. 'How could there be light without a wick?' said a member of Parliament when the subject was brought before the House.

Even Sir Humphry Davy ridiculed the idea of lighting towns by gas, and asked one of the projectors if they meant to take the dome of St. Paul's for a gas-meter. Sir Walter Scott, too, made himself merry over the idea of illuminating London by smoke; though he was glad enough, not so long after, to make his own house at Abbotsford light and cheerful on winter nights by the use of that very smoke.

When the House of Commons was first lighted by gas, even the architect imagined that the gas ran on fire through the pipes, and he therefore insisted on their being placed several inches from the wall, for fear of the building taking fire; and members might be observed carefully touching the pipes with their gloved hands, and wondering they did not feel warm.

The first shop lighted in London by the new method was Mr. Ackermann's, in the Strand, in 1810; and one lady of rank was so delighted with the brilliancy of the gas lamp on the counter that she asked to be allowed to take it home in her carriage.

Mr. Murdoch was, however, too busy with his other pursuits to continue to study the uses of gas, and though he was undoubtedly the first to apply it to practical purposes, many others laid claim to the honour, and other people quickly reaped the benefit of his cleverness and ingenuity. H. A. F.

BEAVERS.

THERE is a variety of beavers called 'bank-beaver,' generally of a reddish hue, which live altogether in holes; and these are more easily trapped than their more scientific brethren.

Beavers have their young about the first of June, and breed but once a year; these number from one to eight. They are pretty little things, about the size of a rat, and are easily tamed: but, on account of their mischievous ways, they are not favourite pets. One pair of young ones that I know of being put in a tub of water, and thinking, doubtless, that their 'lake' should have a creek, proceeded to gnaw the sides till they had made a hole in one of the staves: then they gathered together all kinds of rubbish, consisting of boots, slippers, and so on, with which they tried to make a dam. As it did not answer they were very much cast down, crying and rolling themselves about, like children in a pet.

When they are at large in their rivers, the parents instruct the young ones in the art of masonry; miniature dams and houses being found in the narrow parts of the creek. In the fall of the year the whole family are busy collecting food for the winter supply, which is towed to the store and dwelling-houses; one end of a tree is stuck securely in the mud near the entrance of the house. This food is never touched till they are unable, on account of thick ice, to go on shore.

Beavers. By Harrison Weir.

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Chatterbox.

Janet Ramsay's accident.

THE SISTERS.

(*Continued from page* 211.)

CHAPTER III.—THE NEW HOME.

'T was not much of a home after all, so poor Mr. Ramsay thought, though Ivor Cottage was a pretty little place enough. There was no bright young face to welcome him: still his reception had been kind. Mrs. M'Gregor had sent in an elderly woman to act as housekeeper to him for the present, and she had a blazing fire and a comfortable tea set out for him on the evening of his arrival. Mrs. M'Gregor sent a footman down from the 'great house,' as it was called, to know if Mr. Ramsay found everything comfortable. After his solitary meal was over there came a ring at his door-bell, and in a few minutes his servant ushered in 'Mr. James M'Gregor,' a tall, pleasant-looking man, of about eight-and-twenty, who told him that his mother could not rest until one of them had been down to see that all was right at Ivor Cottage, and to ask if there was anything she could send to make him 'more comfortable.'

On his return to his mother, after a quarter of an hour's interview with Mr. Ramsay, Mr. James M'Gregor found himself rather eagerly questioned as to what he thought of the new arrival. His verdict was, 'Peculiar, clever, and retiring, I should say. I should have guessed him to be a man entirely wrapt up in his books, but for one thing. When I said I was afraid he would find himself rather dull, as I remembered hearing you say he had a daughter, or daughters, living with him in Edinburgh, there came a light in his eyes and a bright smile to his face as he said, "I look forward to the holidays, then my Edinburgh daughter will come home to me." "And your other children?" I ventured to ask, encouraged by having brought him out so far. "I have but one other," he said: 'a younger daughter, at school near London. But she will not come home for a year or two, at any rate, if she continues happy where she is." I expect the poor man is very fond of his children.'

Mr. Ramsay got on fairly well with the few neighbours in his new home. It had been arranged that Kate should stay at school in England, if she was happy, for four years, returning to Scotland for her long summer holidays, but spending all other vacations with old friends of her father, and relatives on her mother's side, who were living in London. But Kate never came home for her summer holidays. She had always invitations sent her for them, and she either spent them at the house of one of her schoolfellows or with her relations. She did not seem to care to come home; in fact, Kate liked luxury and comfort, and her Edinburgh home had no luxuries and few comforts, and she did not think that Kirkton would be any better. She loved her father and sister to a certain extent, but she was selfish by nature, and preferred her comfortable school and the homes in which her vacations were spent. So when the first long vacation came she wrote to Janet to say that as she had invitations to places within easy distance of London, and the journey to Scotland was so great an expense, she thought she would be very foolish even to wish to go home, and she had her own way.

She wrote in nearly the same strain as the summer came round again, and her letters cost Janet many a pang; but she would not say anything to prevent her sister from doing as she so evidently wished, and there was certainly some truth about the expense of the journey to Scotland.

Mr. Ramsay took it all very quietly. He knew Kate was having a good education, and he liked her to make acquaintance with her mother's relations; and as to her schoolfellows, he could not see how it could harm her to visit them. And so it happened, that for nearly three years after Mr. Ramsay went to Kirkton, his home was not brightened by the presence of either of his daughters, for, from one cause and another, Janet did not spend her holidays there. One reason was, that every summer Mrs. M'Gregor insisted on Mr. Ramsay's taking a holiday, and provided a clergyman to take his duty for five or six weeks. This was during the midsummer holidays at Mrs. Ellcourt's, so Mr. Ramsay always went straight to Edinburgh, and took Janet with him to some quiet sea-side place, where they could live cheaply and enjoy each other's society.

At Christmas various things had hindered Janet from visiting Kirkton. One year she had the measles, and was, with two of her schoolfellows, nursed through them by Mrs. Ellcourt. Another year her governess begged that she might stay to be her companion, as she had the prospect before her of a perfectly lonely Christmas. To this, as Mrs. Ellcourt had been so kind to Janet, Mr. Ramsay felt himself bound to accede; and the third Christmas came and went without Kirkton's seeing Janet Ramsay's sweet face; for then fever of a dangerous kind was in the neighbourhood, and Mrs. M'Gregor added her entreaties to those of Mrs. Ellcourt that Mr. Ramsay would not run the risk of bringing his young daughter there.

At last Janet did come home, but in a sadly different way to what her poor father had always pictured to himself. One spring morning, as he was coming out of church, a servant came hurriedly forward to meet him with a telegram, saying, 'This has just come, sir, from Landale.'

Telegrams were so unusual in such an out-of-the-way place as Kirkton, their nearest station being Landale, fourteen miles off, that the very sight of one caused a pang of alarm to Mr. Ramsay, which was terribly increased as he read:—

'Frances Ellcourt, Edinburgh, to Rev. A. Ramsay, Kirkton. Please come by next train; Janet has had an accident: thrown from a carriage. Dr. Fergusson hopes she will do well.'

The poor clergyman felt as one stunned by the blow, and stood holding the paper and looking vacantly about him, till roused by a touch on his arm, and the kind voice of James M'Gregor,—

'You have had some bad news, Mr. Ramsay?'

Mr. Ramsay's only answer was to give him the telegram and cover his face with his hands.

'I will call my mother,' Mr. M'Gregor said, when he had glanced at the telegram.

'I must go home,' said Mr. Ramsay; 'I must go to her at once.'

'Yes, at once; you shall go. We will send you to Landale. Come up and see my mother.'

Mrs. M'Gregor soon came to the poor man, and while a carriage was got ready she tried to console him.

'One comfort,' she said, 'is the high reputation of Dr. Fergusson. If the poor dear child had met with an accident here, we could not have got her anything like such good medical aid until many, many hours had passed.'

Mr. Ramsay groaned. 'Oh, my Janet! my Janet!' he said; 'they would never have sent for such a man as Dr. Fergusson if it had not been terribly——'

But he could get no further. He hardly knew what was said or done until he found himself in a carriage with Mr. James M'Gregor by his side, going along the Landale road.

It was a curious drive and a curious journey altogether to James M'Gregor. Hardly a word was spoken on either side, excepting at the Landale Station when Mr. Ramsay made a feeble effort to prevent the young man from accompanying him further; but gave way, finding it to be of no use to try to hinder him from going to Edinburgh.

'My mother will be so anxious to know about it,' he said; 'I had better go with you.'

When the poor clergyman first heard the sad news, he felt agony such as he had never felt since his wife's death, but as the hours passed on he got calmer. Some verses in one of the Psalms kept ringing in his ears, and speaking peace to his heart:—

'They that put their trust in the Lord shall be even as the Mount Zion: which may not be removed, but standeth fast for ever.' And then: 'The hills stand about Jerusalem; even so standeth the Lord round about His people, from this time forth for evermore.' How could he do anything but put his trust in the Lord? 'Standeth fast for ever.' Yes, he knew it; he was sure of it; and in all his misery he thanked God. And as they alighted at Edinburgh station, and made their way to Mrs. Ellcourt's house, the sweet, consoling words, 'For evermore,' were speaking to his heart, comforting him. And he had sore need of comfort, for very distressing tidings greeted him on his arrival.

Janet's accident had been a very bad one; indeed, for a short time after he got there they feared her case was hopeless. She had been out driving in a pony-carriage with a Mrs. Greyburn, a friend of Mrs. Ellcourt's. The pony took fright at something and ran away, upsetting the carriage, and throwing out both Mrs. Greyburn and Janet. Mrs. Greyburn escaped with very slight injuries, but Janet was thrown on a heap of stones, and taken up insensible. Her spine was injured, and they much feared, for a day or so, that there was injury to her head. She was very ill for a week or two, and then there seemed to be amendment, and Dr. Fergusson said that he hoped that no permanent injury had been done to the spine, and that if Janet would be very patient, and allow herself to be entirely laid by as an invalid, and give it complete rest for some time, he had great hope that there might be restoration again to health and strength. All, however, depended on patience and never-ceasing care.

In two months' time Janet was moved to Kirkton, and there she had been for the last two years or more, hardly leaving her couch, and never going out, excepting in the fine summer weather, when she was taken short distances in an invalid chair, still lying on her back. A servant who waited on her during her illness in Edinburgh, and who had become extremely attached to her, accompanied her to Ivor Cottage, and nursed her.

So it came to pass that when Kate returned from England, more than six months after Janet's accident, Janet was not dependent on her for nursing and care; the servant, Hester Brown, being jealous of any one who tried to take from her any part of the actual waiting on the invalid girl. But Kate might have done much to brighten Janet's life, by being willing to read to her, and stay with her. Alas! Kate was not willing. She had had a great deal of amusement and pleasure-taking during her four years in England, and she found life at Kirkton rather dull; the only break being visits now and then to the Hall. Of late, these visits had become much more frequent; in fact, Mrs. M'Gregor thought it a kindness to ask Kate to come to see them whenever anything was going on; sometimes, a little perhaps, forgetting the invalid sister. Janet was so unselfish and patient, that she would never have had uttered a word which might keep her sister by her side, if she thought she would like to be anywhere else.

Kate was of a very different nature. She was really jealous of Janet — jealous of her father's love for her, of Hester's love for her, of the liking shown for her by Mrs. M'Gregor.

Kate, though she would not have confessed it to herself, envied Janet's loving face and her accomplishments, which were before her own, notwithstanding her English school. And now, sad to say, the news that Janet might be restored to health and strength was not pleasant news to Kate; for she felt in herself that their friends would not think anything of her if Janet came out with her.

So it happened, that on the evening when Janet told her sister of her proposed visit to Edinburgh, and of her hopes of recovery, Kate was not glad. Yet she was shocked at herself, and before Mr. Ramsay joined them at tea she had expressed herself in such a way as, at any rate, to satisfy Janet, who had been for a minute rather surprised and grieved at her sister's cool reception of her tidings.

(To be continued.)

THE CARP AT FONTAINEBLEAU.

FONTAINEBLEAU is a town in France, about thirty-five miles from Paris. It is celebrated for its beautiful palace, which formerly belonged to the kings of France, and also for the wonderful carp in the canals in the park.

The carp is a freshwater fish, which grows to a large size, and lives to an immense age. During the siege of Paris by the Prussians in the winter of 1870 and 1871, Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia took possession of the palace at Fontainebleau; but all the valuable pictures, carpets, state beds, and curious Gobelin tapestry, had been previously removed by the French, and not even a chair was left

for Prince Frederick Charles to sit upon. The gallery of King Henry II., with its sp'endid ceilings, carvings, and paintings, was not injured by the Prussians; but the ancient carp were not left untouched. After the soldiers had eaten hundreds of these venerable fish, Prince Frederick Charles forbade any more being caught; so the specimens, which are said to be oldest, above two hundred years old, and which were shown at the Paris Exhibition in 1867, are still to be seen disputing with the swans for the crumbs thrown to them.

It is said to be common for carp to live one hundred years, but many of these are more than twice that age, and some of them are known to be more than four hundred years old. At Chantilly, a town in France, seventeen miles from Paris, where there is a magnificent forest and a hunting-seat belonging to the Princes of Condé, a carp was killed in 1871 by a huge pike, and the following extraordinary account is given of it. It was the oldest known carp in the world, being 475 years of age, and belonging to Monsieur C——, the proprietor of a fine property at Chantilly. It was born at the Comte de Cossé's in the year 1395, during the reign of King Charles VI., and had passed through various fortunes, having had thirty-two masters. Monsieur de C—— purchased it in 1870 for 1500 francs (a franc is ninepence-halfpenny of English money), and its name was 'Gabrielle.' It measured nearly twenty-nine inches and three-quarters round, and thirty-eight inches and three-quarters in length. This carp certainly was a marvel of longevity, as well as of pugnacity, as it was only killed in combat with the pike at the age of 475. L. C. F.

WONDERS OF NATURE.

NIAGARA.

BETWEEN the two great lakes of Erie and Ontario flows the river Niagara, which is not only the outlet of the waters of Lake Erie but also of the other vast lakes, Huron, Michigan, and Superior, and drains over 150,000 square miles of country. The length of the Niagara is about thirty-six miles; and as Ontario, into which it flows, is much lower than Erie, there must be a succession of rapids, or of cataracts, in its course. The ground is level, or nearly so, where the Niagara leaves Erie; and the stream, nearly a mile wide, goes 'footing slow' about two miles, or a little more, an hour. But its speed is soon increased, and it becomes divided before it reaches the Falls. In the last half mile its bed descends fifty feet. The distracted waters, sliding rapidly downwards, are hurled against the rocky shores of Canada, and are driven back to flash headlong over a wave-worn limestone edge, and to howl and hiss and boil in endless turmoil beneath, after a fall of about 160 feet. The entire cataract, which is about three quarters of a mile broad, is divided into two parts by Goat Island. This island is about 330 yards in width, and is covered with vegetation, and is reached from the mainland by an iron bridge about 360 feet long. The bridge was built in 1856. Goat Island is also the boundary between the dominions of Queen Victoria and the United States. The two great waterfalls are unlike. The American Fall consists of a nearly perpendicular fall of water, but the other Fall is shaped like a horse-shoe, and called by that name. Writers do not quite agree as to the quantity of water which falls hourly; one states that 100,000,000 tons fall over, another that 90,000,000 cubic feet fall, and another authority claims that the hourly fall is 211,836,853 barrels.

The water looks green, as it glides 'like an eternity' over the edge. Long before it reaches the bottom it is lost to sight in a cloud of spray, which ascends from the roaring and falling water. Upon this cloud, when the sun shines, a very lovely rainbow rests, which Mrs. Sigourney, an American poetess, has noticed in these beautiful lines:—

'Flow on for ever in thy glorious robe
Of terror and of beauty! Yea, flow on
Unfathomed and resistless! God hath set
His rainbow on thy forehead, and the cloud
Mantled around thy feet; and He doth give
Thy voice of thunder power to speak of Him
Eternally—bidding the lip of man
Keep silence, and upon thine altar pour
Incense of awe-struck praise. Thou dost speak
Alone of God, Who poured thee as a drop
From His right hand—bidding the soul that looks
Upon thy fearful majesty be still,
Be humbly wrapped in its own nothingness,
And lose itself in Him.'

The two finest points for seeing Niagara are the Table Rock on the British or Canadian side, and Prospect Point on the American. It was from this point that the late Charles Dickens viewed the Fall. He says, 'It came upon me in its full might and majesty. . . . Niagara was at *once stamped* upon my heart an image of beauty, to remain there, changeless and indelible, until its pulses cease to beat for ever.' The Table Rock is a flat surface, as the name imports, jutting out from the shore and overhanging the waterfall. Below this rock it is possible to creep behind the falling water into a cavern; but the path which leads to the place is perilous. One false step might plunge you into the boiling, whirling caldron; and the rocks over which you stride are sharp, broken, and slippery.

At Prospect Point you can approach so close to the waterfall, that a man with a long arm may put that arm over a wall and move his hand in the actually descending water. And what a prospect it is! How the beholder admires, but scarcely envies, the wild duck, swimming down the rapids to the very brink of the precipice, then flying out and repeating the descent with apparent delight; while the blue-bird and the wren take pleasure in flying within one or two feet of the brink, and sport over the frightful fall with evident happiness! We wingless creatures must be content to gaze, from our safe platform of rock, on the glorious combination of snow and emeralds, and on the resistless rush of the giant river, ever moving, ever changing, ever seaward rolling, day and night, summer and winter.

It is surprising that the sound of such a fall of water is not more deafening. The noise, says a late

Horse-shoe Fall, Niagara.

traveller, is never grating, harsh, or startling—never a sound of terror, though it is a voice of strength. Sweet, penetrating, winning rather than forcing its presence on you, it lulls you gently to sleep, as you listen to it from afar. I seemed to understand, says the same writer, how the Apostle John must have been listening to the soft, sweet music of some distant cataract, when writing by the Spirit of God about him, he said, 'His voice was as the sound of many waters.' G. S. O.

LOIC.

A BRETON STORY.

LOIC Le Quern was born in Lower Brittany, at Penzé, upon the river Morlaix. When he was twenty he was a miller's apprentice, and worked at the great mill near the entrance of the village. Loïc possessed nothing but his two strong arms, his robust health, his honest face, and the excellent reputation which the Le Quern family have always enjoyed from father to son, as far back as the traditions of the country reach. Notwithstanding Loïc's poverty, the miller Robert, who was rich, was disposed to give Loïc the most precious of his treasures; I mean, his daughter Anne.

Anne, who was nearly eighteen, was the most pious, as well as the most charming girl to be found in that part of Brittany. But I must not forget to mention that the good Loïc can only speak and understand the Breton language, as different from French as Welsh is from English. How could it be otherwise? It is the language spoken all round him; it is that which he learned to lisp on his mother's knees. Not one of the customers who came to the mill spoke any other. It is in Breton that the pastor preaches. French is for Loïc a learned tongue, which he, Loïc, has no time to study.

However, Anne, who has been to a grand school, and is almost a young lady, has declared that as soon as they were married she would teach Loïc French, and he has promised that under such a professor, if his head be not too thick, he would make very rapid progress. Alas! these were fine dreams. Here is now the cruel reality.

In July, 1870, the war broke out, and Loïc found himself in a regiment in which were a number of Bretons like himself, and sent in the direction of Paris.

When the siege began his regiment formed part of the garrison, and was quartered on the Quai d'Orsay. What an impression Paris made upon our Breton, who had scarcely ever left his native village, and who knew no other capital but Morlaix— a charming town, indeed, but no more to be compared to Paris than a mouse to an elephant! As I said before, Loïc was not the only Breton of his regiment. There were, besides five or six soldiers, two Breton corporals, and a sergeant specially charged to instruct and command the Bretons. Otherwise they would have been obliged to teach them their exercises by signs, which would have been rather difficult work.

But one of these corporals, who was very active, clever, and persevering, had discovered in a corner of Paris an old clergyman, who spoke Breton. This brave man, who was sighing because his bad health prevented him from making the campaign, was delighted with this chance of usefulness. When it became known to the Bretons in other regiments he became a sort of missionary, and was so occupied in teaching his fellow-countrymen, in going about from one end of Paris to the other, and to the different forts, that he had but little time for anything else.

Thanks to his comrades, thanks especially to this good chaplain, Loïc bore the hardships and fatigues of the siege like a brave man and a Christian.

But at Champigny he had his leg broken. Separated from his regiment, brought back with three Alsatians, two Marseillais, and an Auvergnat, he was carried at last to a small private hospital in the Rue du Roi de Sicile.

It is a sad thing indeed to have a leg broken, and Loïc, brave as he was, uttered many a groan whilst the assistant-surgeons pulled it about with all their strength in the hope of setting it. Then he suffered from a burning fever, which for several days placed his life in danger. But these bodily sufferings were nothing compared to the grief which racked his soul. He felt that he was about to die, far from his father, his mother, his sisters, far from her whom he loved with such a pure and devoted affection, especially (for Loïc was an excellent Christian) without a clergyman to comfort him on that last journey. Ah! how bitterly did he then regret that he had not learned French! Since being brought to Champigny there had not been a Breton near him, and in that little hospital there was not a creature who spoke Breton or guessed that the gibberish talked by the fellow with a broken leg might be Breton.

Loïc had nothing on his person by which he could make himself known; the metal plate which indicated the number of his regiment had been lost in the battle. He had recourse to the language of signs. To denote his regiment, he counted twenty-five on his fingers. They thought he was telling them his age, or that, with the whim of a sick man, he wanted to ask that they should give him twenty-five plums for his breakfast. Then he recollected that his regiment had this one peculiarity in the army, a Negro drum-major. He took some of the juice of his plums and rubbed his face all over with it. Then seizing a broom which was within reach, he tried to imitate the action of the drumstick. 'Ah! you want to say that you have been a chimney-sweep,' said the attendant, 'and that you come from Auvergne or Savoy, and that you know how to make bears dance!'

Loïc's leg was rapidly getting well, but he was getting worse and worse himself. So long as he had his Breton comrades about him, Loïc had valiantly borne the grief of being far from his family. He saw his friends, he heard them talking that dear Breton tongue. He seemed to be at home. But now that he was alone, in this little hospital, in this narrow street, far from the pure air of the mountains, without a human being whose language he understood, or who could say a friendly word to him, poor Loïc felt as if he must die of grief.

'Oh, Lord,' he often said, 'into Thy hands I com-

mend my spirit. Have pity upon me, and upon all whom I love here below. Have pity on our poor France.'

And this humble prayer was heard and answered.

Among many instances of good people who might have left the city, and yet preferred to remain that they might do good to their suffering fellow-countrymen, were M. and Madame Burlard, who, having no children of their own to care for, had said, when the siege began, 'Let us do our duty as God wills it; all who are in distress shall be our children: we shall have a large family.'

They had not a great fortune, but they lived with the strictest economy. More than half of their income was spent in works of charity. Moreover, M. Burlard devoted to these works all the time he could spare from his business, and Madame Burlard her whole days; sometimes, too, part of her nights.

One day Madame Burlard heard of the hospital in the Rue du Roi de Sicile. She hastened thither and said to sister Julie, 'Is there anything I can do for you, sister?'

'Yes, indeed; but it is very difficult. We have a poor man here in a sad state. He has had a leg broken, it has been well set. But he is very bad himself. Our doctors don't understand his case at all, and have almost given him up.'

'What part does he come from?'

'Oh! there is our puzzle. He talks a great deal, but a strange language which no one can understand. I know English and a little German. Sister Anastasie speaks Italian as well as French, and understands Spanish very well. One of our doctors, who has been in the North, has some idea of Russian, Swedish, and Norwegian. The other, who has lived a long time in the East, is acquainted with most of their languages, of which I do not know even the name. Well! not one of us has been able to understand a word our sick soldier says.'

'Can he be a Breton?'

Madame Burlard was herself a Breton, a thorough-going Breton from St. Pol, and she had the warmest affection for her country people.

'Well, I don't know, he might be,' said the sister.

'Take me to see him.'

She had scarcely entered the little door when she stood before the sick man and said to him in Breton —'How are you, my poor man?'

At these words Loïc raised himself up, rubbed his eyes, stretched out his arms, and looked around him as if in a dream.

Sister Julie, who stood by in eager expectation, said to the lady,—

'Oh, madame, what did you say to him then?'

'I only asked him how he was in Breton, and I am sure he understood me.'

Then she asked Loïc, who required no pressing, What place he came from? what he was suffering from? whether he wanted anything? was he glad to hear Breton spoken again?

Then Loïc asked in his turn, 'But where then do you come from, madame?'

'From St. Pol.'

'What! you are from St. Pol? Oh, dear madame!'

Every day at noon his kind friend had come to see him, but one day she did not come; the good lady was kept at home by the bedside of her own nephew, who had been brought back in a desperate condition from the plains of Avron.

Loïc was in a hurry to get quite well—it was only the affair of two days—in order to go and see his benefactress. He arrived just in time to help her to nurse her poor nephew, who soon afterwards died.

When peace was made Loïc returned to Penzé. Though his leg was well, it was always stiff, which made him unfit for service. Anne was expecting him, and soon after they were married.

They often go to St. Pol to see Madame Burlard.

'Without you I should certainly have died in that hospital,' Loïc often says: 'Your sweet voice speaking to me in Breton stopped me on the road to the cemetery. How good you have been to me, a poor, dying, ragged fellow, and half out of his senses! and what an honour you did me!'

When he insisted thus in thanking her, Madame Burlard would silence him by saying, 'My lad, you know, that in helping you I was not thinking of you only, but of the Master of us both, our Lord Jesus Christ.'

J. F. C.

A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

PLACED beneath a bush of pale sweet roses, in the grounds of the Grand Hôtel Victoria, Mentone, may be seen a small column of white marble, on which is inscribed in gilt letters, 'Here lies Pietrino, a faithful friend, 1872.' Who was Pietrino?

Among the visitors at the hôtel in the summer of 1872 were two Archduchesses of Austria. One of them, the Archduchess Marie Régnier, noticed and took a fancy to a fine dog belonging to the owner of the hôtel. The Archduchess made much of the noble dog during the three months which she spent at Mentone, and was so fond of him that she obtained permission of Mons. Milandi, owner of the hôtel, to take him with her to Vienna. But there home-sickness soon seized Pietrino! He disappeared—search for him everywhere was fruitless. In ten days afterwards he was seen to enter the Hôtel Victoria at Mentone! Exhausted, bruised, and hardly able to breathe, the poor animal laid himself down at the feet of his master, who at once telegraphed to Vienna and learnt back that the date of his departure was exactly ten days. Poor Pietrino must have travelled about 800 miles during those ten days, even if he travelled in a direct course, crossing mountains, rivers, and valleys, and passing through villages, towns, and countries which he had never seen before, and picking up for food whatever he might chance to find on the way. Although every care and attention were given to him, poor Pietrino died five days after his return to Mentone.

Pietrino.

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Chatterbox.

Helping themselves.

HELPING THEMSELVES.

OH, Baby! my baby-boy! what are you at?
The whole of your breakfast to Punch and the cat!
You had but to wait just one little minute,
But those mischievous fingers at once must go in it!
I hope it was not a conspiracy
For gain and for plunder between you three.
What will you do to show your regret?
Will you go without breakfast, my troublesome pet?
'Baby *tho* hungry!'—oh, yes! I dare say!
But helping yourself is not quite the best way.
Now you must wait for five minutes at least;
The other two rogues have had a good feast.
Both mother and nurse are too apt to forget
That nothing is safe within reach of their pet.
Be off with you, Punch—you're almost as bad;
Now run away, Puss—there's no more to be had.
Such waste and destruction I never did see!
All from helping yourselves, you mischievous three!

A*.

THE SISTERS.

(*Continued from page* 219.)

CHAPTER IV.—EXTRACTS FROM LILIAN'S JOURNAL.

TUESDAY—Such a strange thing has happened! Miss Ramsay—Janet, I mean—is gone to Edinburgh! Kate Ramsay has just been here to see Helena and told us; and they think she will get well and strong again. I heard Kate say, as she left the schoolroom, "She isn't sure she shall get well, and I'm sure I don't know!" So the minute I'd done my lessons I ran off to grandmother to ask what it meant. Granny smiled, and said, "Since Dr. Fergusson's visit to Janet, about a fortnight ago, we have felt great hope for her; and yesterday Mr. Ramsay took her to Edinburgh, where she will stay till the spring under the doctor's care; and he says he quite thinks she will be restored.'

'"Where will she stay in Edinburgh, grandmother? will she stay by herself? Mr. Ramsay can't stay *with her all the* winter, can he?" I said.

'"No, my dear; certainly not!" said granny. "She will stay with her old schoolmistress, Mrs. Ellcourt; and she has Hester Brown, who waits on her at home, with her."

'I was just going to leave the room when in came Helena. Helena, with such eager eyes—and such a flushed face!

'"Helen! what is it?" said grandmother.

'"Oh, granny! you know Mr. and Miss Ramsay are gone to Edinburgh, and Kate is all alone at the house, with only the housekeeper; and she says it is so dull! Mightn't she come here? I should like——"

'But grandmother interrupted her with—

'"When does Mr. Ramsay come back, Helen?"

'"Not till Saturday," said Helena. "Couldn't she come till then, at any rate?"

'"She can come here till her father comes back, my dear," said grandmother. "I will speak to her myself. But she had better go home on Saturday. I should not like him to find a deserted house on his return."

'"Thank you, dear granny!" said Helen.

'But that wasn't all she had to say, I saw in a minute. Her face flushed, and she came closer to grandmother.

'"I'm sure she needs a new dress so badly! I wish I might give her one. You know I have so many dresses myself; and the other day Uncle Donald gave me five pounds to do what I liked with! May I buy her a silk dress with it?'

'"My dear, certainly not!" said grandmother; "she would not like to take such a present from you at all, I should think. It would seem to say that she was not well dressed enough for us. You know Mr. Ramsay is not a rich man, and his daughters must dress according to their means. I think they generally look neat: I am sure Janet does!"

'*Thursday Evening.*—What happened at breakfast time this morning was entirely owing to grandmother's kindness, I'm sure; though she looked all the time as if she knew nothing about it. Uncle Donald said to us,—

'"Young ladies, can you get Mrs. Nugent to excuse your lessons to-day? I am going to drive into Landale on business, and shall have to be there several hours. I will take the waggonette, if you would all like to go; but I must start in half-an-hour's time, and grandmother need not expect us back till the evening."

'Oh, how delightful!' I cried out: 'to do just as we like all day!'

'"Ah, that's just it!" said grandmother. "What will you do with the girls all day, Donald?"

'"I suppose they can be trusted to take care of themselves for once in a way!" he said. "They shall have an early dinner with me at the hotel, and then they can spend the afternoon in shopping and amusing themselves."

'I happened to glance at Kate Ramsay, and the thought had just flashed into my mind that shopping can't be very amusing when one hasn't got any money to spend, when Uncle Donald took out of his pocket-book two crisp five-pound notes, and, looking up at Helena, said,—

'"I made you a little present of this kind the other day, Helen; I don't know whether you have spent it or not?" (Helena laughed and shook her head.) "And now here are five pounds for Lily, and the same for Miss Ramsay, if she will accept it. I shall not give you another, Helen. You can spend it as you please, and I dare say you will be able to pass away the afternoon pleasantly in doing that."

'"Oh! thank you, Mr. M'Gregor," cried Kate, with such sparkling eyes; "but, please, I wish you would call me 'Kate,' and not 'Miss Ramsay.' I don't know if I ought to take it," she added, doubtfully.

'"Oh, yes, my dear," said grandmother, smiling, "if Uncle Donald likes to spoil you all so dreadfully. But I object, Donald, to your putting into the girls'

heads the idea of spending so much money all at once this afternoon."

'And I'm sure, as grandmother spoke, she looked rather towards Kate, and I fancied she was anxious that she should not, at any rate, think it necessary to spend all that money at one time. But grandmother turned to me: "I expect to see some of your money when you come back, Lily."

'I said, "I've only one or two things to buy, grandmother, and they won't take nearly five pounds." But, somehow, I could not bear Kate to feel there was any restriction placed upon her about spending hers, when I knew there must be so many things she wanted badly.

'Well, we went off with Uncle Donald, and I did enjoy the drive, for I was on the box with him, as he drove us himself.

'After we had had dinner at the hotel in Landale, Uncle Donald wished us good-bye, and told us not to be too extravagant, and to come back to the hotel to meet him about five o'clock. So we went out together and strolled about the streets, looking at the shops, till we came to one where there were some silk dresses hanging in the window, and Kate asked if we should go in there, and Helena said, "Oh, yes! it's a dress you want, isn't it?" And in we went.

'I began to look at some pretty ribbons, one of which I thought would just suit Mrs. Nugent, and I thought I should like to give her one, and so I did not notice much what Helena and Kate were doing till I had chosen it; and then, when I looked at them, there was the shopman folding up a beautiful bright blue silk dress! I went up to them and said, "Have you bought that?" to Kate, and she said, "Yes," rather shortly, as if she did not like to be asked questions.

'I was foolish enough to say, "Why, I never have bright blue! it makes me look so—I don't know what! They always get me other colours. And you are dark. It's only Helena's kind of complexion——"

'"I dare say it will do very well for me," Kate said, in a putting-down way.

'And then Helena began to buy some little things she wanted, and Kate interested herself very much in what Helena was choosing, and they took no more notice of me, and I began to feel quite dull. We went to several other shops, and Helena and I bought some things, but Kate had no more money to spend. She had spent all her five pounds on that blue silk dress! I could not help thinking it was silly of Kate, when I felt sure a plainer dress would have been more useful; and I felt rather cross because they didn't talk to me: but the drive home on the box again with Uncle Donald freshened me up and blew away my ill-temper.

'We had such fun a great part of the way, because I had bought for myself a cage and two canaries—of a "very choice sort," the man said—and uncle did tease me so. First of all, about the size of the cage. When he saw it at the hotel, he said it was impossible to find room for it in the waggonette; but they did get it in easily. Then he said, when I told him what a splendid kind of canary they were, that he should get up quite early the next morning, in order to see the choice little sparrows take their first bath, and see how the yellow would all come off in the water! He told me they actually did paint sparrows up to pass for canaries. I thought he was only laughing at me, but I got quite frightened at last, he seemed so serious; and then he said he hoped it would be all right, but he should not be surprised at anything.

'The first thing when I got in I ran to grandmother, to know if I might keep my new canaries in the schoolroom, and when she gave leave, I went to see them hung up. When I had done this, and was going upstairs to take off my things, I met Helena. I could not bear that there should be any coldness between us, so I thought I would see if she was offended with me, and set it right if I could, and I asked her if she could come and speak to me a minute.

'"Yes, dear," she said, in her usual loving way; and when we were inside my room I said, "You are vexed with me, Helena, for saying that about Kate Ramsay's dress?"

'Helena smiled and said, "Oh, I dare say it's all right now; but, you see, we've no business to interfere with her—have we? She is older than either of us."

'"Not so much older than you," I said; "but didn't you think it a pity, Helena, to buy such a bright-looking silk dress as that, when a plainer one——"

'"Don't, darling!" interrupted Helena; "it's not our place to judge, and it must be so painful to have so little money; and she wished for a pretty dress, and one like mine. And, you know, she was to have gone to Edinburgh, poor girl! and just at the last minute they changed their minds, and didn't take her; and she was going to have bought herself a new dress there." And Helena gave me a kiss and left me.

'At tea granny said that she would look at our purchases to-morrow, "canaries and all."

'"Sparrows and all, you mean, mother," said teasing uncle. "Lilian, if those birds turn out to be anything like canaries to-morrow morning, I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll send to Germany for a real splendid German canary for you; and if they turn out to be sparrows, as I say they will, you must spend the rest of your five pounds on the most magnificent new walking-stick you can buy for me."

'"That sounds like a bet, uncle," I said, "and I don't like bets."

'"Never mind," said the teasing uncle. "I shall hold you to it whether you like it or not."

'"Well, it's pretty safe," I said; "for they are certainly not sparrows."

'But I felt a little misgiving all the same.

'*Saturday Afternoon.*—Now I've a long time for writing, and I have the schoolroom all to myself. Mrs. Nugent is gone away till Monday; Kate is gone home; and Helena is spending the day with some friends. I have such a number of things to write about.

'Yesterday morning I went to the schoolroom before I went in to breakfast, and opened the door rather anxiously, for I knew it was likely my poor birds would have washed by that time, and—what did I see in my beautiful, bright new cage, but two sparrows! Yes, sparrows, as brown as brown could be! I burst out crying, never heeding Kate Ramsay, who had followed me into the room.

"There has been some trick!"

"'Stop! stop!" she cried; "don't vex yourself like that. Just let me see;" and she went up to the cage. "These are not the quiet, tame little canaries you brought home yesterday. There has been some trick."

"'They're not, indeed," I sobbed, "canaries at all. There has been a trick, and a very bad one, too! I shall ask grandmother to let me send them back to the man to-day. I can't go in to breakfast and see uncle; he will laugh at me so!"

'And not heeding Kate's "Oh! but I don't mean that at all, Lilian," I rushed off, crying, to find

Labakan in his new suit followed by the children.

granny. There she was, with Uncle Donald, in the hall.

'"Lilian, what's the matter?" cried Uncle Donald.

'"Oh! it's true! it's true, Uncle Donald!" I sobbed; "they are sparrows." Uncle Donald could not help laughing.

'"Don't fret, little woman! don't fret!" he said; "let us hear all about it. What have you seen?"

'And then I began to tell the story to grandmother.

'"Sparrows, my dear!" she said. "Nonsense! Where did you buy them? At Foster's? He is

a very honest man. There must be some mistake. I can't believe it."

'"They're as brown as mice!" I said, and as I spoke I looked up at grandmother, and saw she was looking at Uncle Donald, who was gone off to the end of the hall, and was standing with his back to us, examining some riding-whips.

'"Can't you go and see what's the matter, Donald?" she said: "the child is really vexed!"

'"Come in and have some breakfast," said grandmother to me; "and Uncle Donald shall go and look at them, and we'll see all about it after breakfast."

'Just then Kate appeared in the hall, and came up to grandmother. "Oh, Mrs. M'Gregor!" she said, "it's such an extraordinary thing about poor Lilian's canaries! There are two horrid little sparrows in the cage! I don't believe it a bit!"

'There was that wretched Uncle Donald laughing, and he said, "What don't you believe? Won't you even say, 'Good morning,' to me?"

'I saw Kate shake hands with him, and grandmother said,—

'"Don't be teasing, Donald! I don't like jokes carried too far." And uncle went off somewhere, and granny petted me up, and made me begin breakfast. I could hardly swallow a mouthful, for thinking of my miserable brown canaries, when in came Uncle Donald, saying, "There must be a mistake somewhere, I think, Lily. The canaries in your cage are as yellow as daffodils!"

'Up I jumped. "Oh, granny, what does uncle mean? May I go?" And I ran to the schoolroom, and there were my two darling yellow canaries as bright as ever in the cage! One of them washing itself in its pan of water. I rubbed my eyes, to make sure that I saw right. And then there were exclamations from Kate and Helen of "You changed the birds to tease Lilian, Mr. M'Gregor! You know you did, Uncle Donald! For shame!"

'And then it flashed into my mind what that naughty uncle had done. How silly I was not to think of it before! He had caught two sparrows, and put them in the cage to tease me.

'"I'm afraid you will none of you forgive me," said Uncle Donald. "It was a foolish joke. If I thought it would have really vexed my little Lilian I would not have done it."

(*To be continued.*)

LABAKAN;

OR, THE UNTRUTHFUL TAILOR.

By Hauff. Adapted from the German.

MANY years ago a tailor assistant of the name of Labakan lived in Alexandria. He was an industrious workman, but he had acquired a habit of boasting and telling untruths, which had so grown upon him that no one believed his words. He had often got into trouble through his lies, but as yet no annoyance had cured him of his fault. He delighted in saying to his friends that he was a prince in disguise, and when his companions went out for a holiday he stayed at home, put on a robe he had bought for the occasion, and walked up and down the room with a stately air, as if he were a prince. Now and then he strolled into the streets wearing his robe, and when he met his companions greeted them with a lordly air.

It happened that a foreign prince, residing for a while at Alexandria, sent a splendid court-dress to Labakan's master to repair. It was intrusted to Labakan as the neatest workman. When he had finished it, and the other assistants in the workshop were gone, he put it on to see how it would suit him. It fitted admirably, and desiring to tell a friend that the dress was a present to him from a prince, he went in the robes to his friend's house. Yet when he reached the door he changed his mind, and instead of entering returned to his own house, pocketed his savings, and with his new dress left the town secretly. Now from a boaster and a liar he had become a thief.

The following day he travelled in his gay attire, and drew upon him general attention; the children in the villages through which he passed crowded round him and cried, 'A prince! a prince! a foreign prince!' This pleased Labakan much, and he determined to buy a horse, for he thought it unbecoming for a prince to walk on foot. Accordingly he purchased an old mare; she was a little lame, yet suited him well enough, for, being a tailor, he had had no chance of learning the art of horsemanship.

The third day as he was ambling up the side of a hill, a young knight on a splendid black charger accosted him. Labakan greeted him with becoming courtesy, and taking a great fancy to one another, they agreed to travel together.

Labakan, as was his custom when he met a stranger, told his new acquaintance a long-invented story of his royal descent and princely brothers, and the stranger in return for the supposed confidence told his own history, which, though true, surpassed the tailor's in interest.

He related that he had been educated as the nephew of the Sheik of Alexandria, who at his death, that had occurred a few months ago, disclosed to his supposed nephew that he was not really related to him, but was the son of the King of Abyssinia. He had been educated under a false name, because astrologers had warned his father at his birth to send him away, for they foretold that till his twenty-first birthday he stood in danger of losing his life through a treacherous friend. The prince also told Labakan that he had a dagger that would identify him. 'This dagger,' said he, 'the Sheik gave me on his deathbed; I am to present it to my father's officers whom I shall meet on my birth-day near a well-known pillar, forty miles eastward from Alexandria. I am to say, "Here is the prince whom ye seek!" and if they answer, "Thrice welcome to Abyssinia!" I am to follow them into my father's presence.'

He further added that his name was Omar, that he never remembered seeing his royal parents, and that his twenty-first birth-day would come to pass in two days, and that he hoped to reach his place of destination the following day.

Prince Omar did not know on what an unworthy fellow he had bestowed his confidence, else most likely he would have kept his secrets to himself.

The tailor pondered much over the story he had heard; he turned it over and over in his own mind. How could he get possession of the dagger that was to identify the prince?

They did not reach an inn that evening, and had to seek shelter for the night in a ruinous hut. Both retired to rest, but Labakan not to sleep. He had formed a plan in his own mind, and at midnight he arose and stealthily entered the prince's apartment. Perceiving the hilt of the dagger under Omar's pillow he drew it cautiously away and secreted it in his own garment. Then he hurried out to saddle the prince's horse, and leaving his lame old mare for Omar, he set forth on his journey shortly after midnight.

When the prince awoke in the morning and discovered the theft, Labakan had gained a considerable start before him, and as he allowed himself no rest he reached the pillar which the unwary prince had described in good time.

His conscience certainly upbraided him for the fraud he was going to commit, yet the love of appearing more than he was, and the evil spirit of lying, had gained so great a hold over him, that his conscience in vain condemned him.

The next morning at daybreak he saw a troop of gaily dressed riders pouring into the valley.

'It is the King of Abyssinia!' cried Labakan; 'he is coming to meet his son!' and his heart fluttered with excitement. He then took his black horse by the bridle and ascended the hillock upon which the far-famed pillar stood. A circle of old men were already collected there, and amongst them towered a tall commanding figure, whose rich dress and majestic bearing betokened him to be the king.

The tailor bowed low to the figure in the centre, and presented his dagger, with the words—'Here is the prince whom you seek!'

'Thou art thrice welcome!' answered the king, and then he clasped his supposed son to his heart, shedding tears of joy over him.

Ah! how proud was Labakan! he too, shed tears, but they were not from affection, but from joy that his deception had succeeded so well. Yet his rapture was but short-lived, for as he looked around him he beheld a rider on horseback hurrying over the plain. The horse appeared worn out and fatigued, and stumbled frequently, yet the rider urged it on with hands and feet, and as he looked closer he saw that the horseman was Omar, who was spurring on his old lame mare.

In a short time the rider reached the foot of the hill. He sprang to the ground, and hurrying up the mound cried with a loud voice,—'A traitor has deceived thee, my father. I am the true Omar: believe him not, he is a liar!'

The old king looked in surprise at the new-comer, but Labakan, who had gone too far in his deception to withdraw, turned to the king and said, apparently unconcerned, 'It is the mad tailor from Alexandria, Labakan, and he has taken it into his head to assume my name. I beseech thee, royal father, to forgive his folly, and not to punish him as he deserves!'

Omar, on hearing these words, turned indignantly towards Labakan, and so fierce were his looks, that the officers who had collected round the supposed prince placed themselves between him and Labakan.

'Truly, my son,' said the king, 'the man is mad: he shall be well secured, and follow in the vanguard on one of the dromedaries.'

'Hear me, father!' cried Omar, in a piteous voice; but the king, anxious to get rid of him, turned to his supposed son and bade him follow him to the royal carriages.

The officers surrounded Omar; his sword was seized, and whilst the king and Labakan seated themselves in a chariot, the true prince was fettered with chains and placed on one of the dromedaries.

(*Concluded in our next.*)

NOTHING TO DO.

I HAVE shot my arrows, and spun my top,
And handled my last new ball;
I trundled my hoop till I had to stop,
And I swung till I got a fall;
I tumbled my books all out of the shelves,
And hunted the pictures through;
I've flung them where they may sort themselves,
And now—I have nothing to do.

The tower of Babel I built of blocks
Came down with a crash to the floor;
My train of cars ran over the rocks—
I'll warrant they'll run no more;
I have raced with Grip till I'm out of breath;
My slate is broken in two,
So I can't draw monkeys—I'm tired to death,
Because I have nothing to do.

The boys have gone to the pond to fish—
They bothered me, too, to go;
But for fun like that I hadn't a wish,
For I think it's mighty 'slow'
To sit all day at the end of a rod
For the sake of a minnow or two,
Or to land, at the farthest, an eel on the sod—
I'd rather have nothing to do.

Maria has gone to the woods for flowers,
And Lucy and Rose are away
After berries—I'm sure they've been out for hours,
I wonder what makes them stay!
Ned wanted to saddle Brunette for me,
But riding is nothing new;
'I was thinking you'd relish a canter,' said he,
'Because you have nothing to do.'

I wish I was poor Jim Foster's son,
For he seems so happy and gay
When his wood is chopped and his work all done,
With his little half-hour of play;
He neither has books, nor top, nor ball,
Yet he's singing the whole day through:
But then—he is never tired at all
Because he has nothing to do.

MARGARET J. PRESTON.

Nothing to do.

'THE PRIZE' for Girls and Boys. Price One Penny every month.
May be had everywhere.

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Chatterbox.

Grandmother examining the girls' purchases.

THE SISTERS.

(*Continued from page 230.*)

AFTER I had done my lessons for the morning, I went into the library to get a book I wanted. In there was grandmother, writing. She looked up as I came in, and said,—

'"Is that you, Lilian? You know I have not yet seen any of your purchases, excepting the canaries. I hope the other things you bought will not cause quite so much excitement. Uncle Donald is a very naughty man, and I have told him so. I have asked Helena and Kate Ramsay to fetch their things for me to see. Would you like to show me the rest of yours?"

'Off I went, and brought back what grandmother said was a "curious collection." I wonder why people laugh at the presents I buy? They seem to me to be all right, and just what is wanted. Then Helena and Kate came in with their parcels. Grandmother turned from my things to theirs. Helena's things were soon looked at—some little things she wanted herself, some presents for some of the poor people, and a new spectacle-case for grandmother. I thought Kate Ramsay undid her parcel rather slowly, as if she did not half like showing it, and I could not help feeling, whatever Helena might say, that it was odd of her to spend all that money upon herself, when she had a dear old father and a sick sister not at all well off. But I was very sorry for Katie directly, for I saw grandmother was quite displeased, and every one seems to care so very much for her opinion. I wished I was out of the room, or anywhere, so as not to hear what she was going to say.

'"My dear, it seems rather foolish to have bought such a gay-looking dress—doesn't it? A quieter-looking silk would have been just the thing for you on Sundays, while that will be useless: so very unsuitable for your Sunday-school work."

'Kate was as red as fire, and though she looked very angry it was as much as she could do to keep the tears back, it was so mortifying for her. Helena looked, oh, so miserable and sorry! and, I know, wished as much as I did that we were out of the room. It wouldn't have been half so bad for Kate if she had been alone with grandmother. Kate put a great restraint upon herself, I think, to keep from giving grandmother an angry answer; and she said, "I wanted a best silk dress, Mrs. M'Gregor, and I wished for one like—for one like——" and here she broke down. "Helena's" came out at last, with a sort of gasp. All grandmother's displeasure vanished, and putting her hand kindly on Kate's arm she said, "Never mind, my dear. You will learn as you get older how to make a wise use of money. You see your dear father isn't a rich man—is he? and it would have been better to have thought of him and of your sister a little in spending so much money as five pounds. At least, if you had been my granddaughter I should certainly have said so. I suppose you think, as you are not, that I have no right to interfere with you. Forgive me, and allow me an old woman's privilege of speaking my mind."

'"I thought," Kate said, rather sulkily, "I might do as I liked with the money."

'"Oh, yes, so you might," said grandmother; "as you liked. We all have our free choice in many things; but we owe our obedience to one law and one Lawgiver, in small things as in great."

'"Shall I change the dress?" said Kate.

'"Think it over first, my dear," said granny, her voice softening. "Tell me your decision to-morrow evening. If you like to make me your wardrobe-woman you shall tell me by-and-by what dresses you have and what you are likely to want."

'And grandmother turned to her writing-table again, which was a sign she had quite done with us for the present. I thought that Kate was sorry, so I was very much astonished when I went into the schoolroom after I had put my purchases away again, to find her there, quite in what I should call a passion. Helena was standing up looking quite frightened, and trying to say everything she could think of to soothe her. Kate was saying, "It's too bad to treat one so because one is poor! Don't I like pretty dresses as well as you?" And then, catching sight of me, she said, "I never can get a minute alone with you, it seems!" Helena got very red, fearing, I suppose, I should be vexed; but I went straight to my desk, and began searching for a letter, as if I had not heard what Kate said, and Helena answered, "Dear, don't vex yourself. Of course you wished for a pretty dress. Only grandmother is rather particular, you see; but she will be sure to get over it."

'"Particular!" cried Kate. "And why should she be particular about what dress I have? I'm neither her daughter nor her servant!"

'"Oh, Kate! it's only my awkward way of putting it!" said poor Helena. "I mean, grandmother rather likes, I fancy, to be consulted about anything we buy in that way."

'I had found my letter by this time, so I went away, as I was sure they did not like my being there.

'After luncheon I went for a delightful ride on Hotspur, the pony I have when I'm here, with Uncle Donald. When we were on our road home we met Mr. Ramsay. He stopped to tell Uncle Donald how Miss Ramsay was, and uncle told him Kate was with us; and then I said, for I knew Kate did not expect him home before Saturday, that I hoped he would let her stay with us till then; and I said, feeling rather amazed at myself for being so bold, "Won't you come up and see her this afternoon?" Mr. Ramsay looked kindly at me, and answered, "Yes, I am coming up this evening to see Mrs. M'Gregor. I am glad you like my Kate."

'In the evening Mr. Ramsay came up to the Hall, when we were all in the drawing-room, and after having a long talk with grandmother he said to Kate as he took his leave, "I shall see you home to-morrow, I suppose; I brought a parcel from Edinburgh for you: it is a present from Janet; I left it in the hall; I thought you would not like to wait till to-morrow to open it."

'I was surprised to see Kate's face flush up, as if

she was quite put out and displeased, instead of being glad to have a present sent her; but I soon saw how it was. "Oh!" Helena exclaimed, not seeing Kate's face as I did, "how nice, to be sure! I'll get it for you in a minute, Kate;" and down she ran to the hall, not heeding Kate's "Pray don't trouble about it!"

'"My dear, if we may," said grandmother; "we should all like to see what Janet has sent you."

'Kate, instead of looking pleased, as a large brown-paper parcel was placed on the table by Helena, seemed confused and uncomfortable.

'Grandmother noticed it then, and said, "Perhaps you would rather take it to your room, my dear, and undo it there? I am afraid we have been rather curious and meddling."

'I am sure Kate would have given anything if she could have found an excuse for taking it away before the string was untied, but she could think of nothing to say but "Oh, no, pray undo it," in a tone of voice that certainly meant "Pray don't!"

'But Helena, who still noticed nothing, was already undoing the string, saying, "Oh, grandmother! of course she would like to see her things! It's so delightful, I always think, to have presents from Edinburgh."

'The paper was opened, and there was one of the very prettiest silk dresses I ever saw—a green-and-black striped dress, and some pretty gloves, collars and cuffs, and a note, which Kate took up and began to read.

'"That is a pretty dress," said grandmother, "and so suitable for our Sundays here. But what a pity about that blue one! I really think you had better change it now, Kate, my dear. I suppose you had no idea this was coming?"

'I saw Helena look up rather curiously at Kate, and then, as Kate said nothing in answer to grandmother, a flush came over her face, and she turned away, and began looking at the pictures in some magazines that were lying on the table.

'Grandmother did not seem to notice anything, but went on, after looking at the other little things, "How is Janet, my dear?"

'"Pretty well, she says," said Kate, but she did not offer to show grandmother the note, though I am sure granny looked as if she would like to see it. Just then she was called out of the room, and Kate said, tossing the note over to Helena, "There's Janet's note, if you care to see it."

'Helena read, and as she read she looked more uncomfortable than before.

'Presently she said, "The dress I promised to send you! the present I had the other day!" and asked quite sharply, I thought, for Helena, "What does that mean, Kate? Then you knew she was going to send you a dress?"

'"Oh!" Kate said, in a careless manner, "I knew she had said something about it, but then I thought she was sure to choose me some dull grey or brown thing—a *useful* dress, as they call it; so I thought I'd have something pretty for once."

'"But, you see, she has chosen you anything but a dull dress," said Helena, looking grave. "And what does she mean by the present she had the other day?"

'"Oh, Mrs. Greyburn, the lady out of whose carriage Janet was thrown when she met with that bad accident, is always sending her something she thinks will please her, and the other day she sent her ten pounds. Janet spent a good deal of it in a very expensive new book she knew father wanted, and I suppose she has spent the rest of it in *this way*. She need not have sent me so much, though," Kate added, in rather a sulky tone, looking, I thought, a little ashamed.

'"Well, Kate, if I had been you, I would have spent part of my five pounds on poor Janet!"

'"Poor Janet!" said Kate, in a mocking tone. "Rich Janet, I think! Every one cares for her, no one for me! I did not wish my blue silk dress to have cost all my five pounds, did I? You are as bad as Mrs. M'Gregor, Helena!"

'Helena did not answer, but left the room. Kate collected her things and walked off after her.

'This morning Kate went home. After she was gone Helena said to me, "I'm afraid I've rather neglected my dear little sister. Always speak the truth, Lilian." And I heard her say softly to herself, "Who shall rest upon Thy holy hill? He that speaketh the truth from his heart!" And then she added, "That would be good for a scroll, Lily; wouldn't it?" I felt sorry for Kate, though, for I felt sure she had lost Helena's friendship.'

(To be continued.)

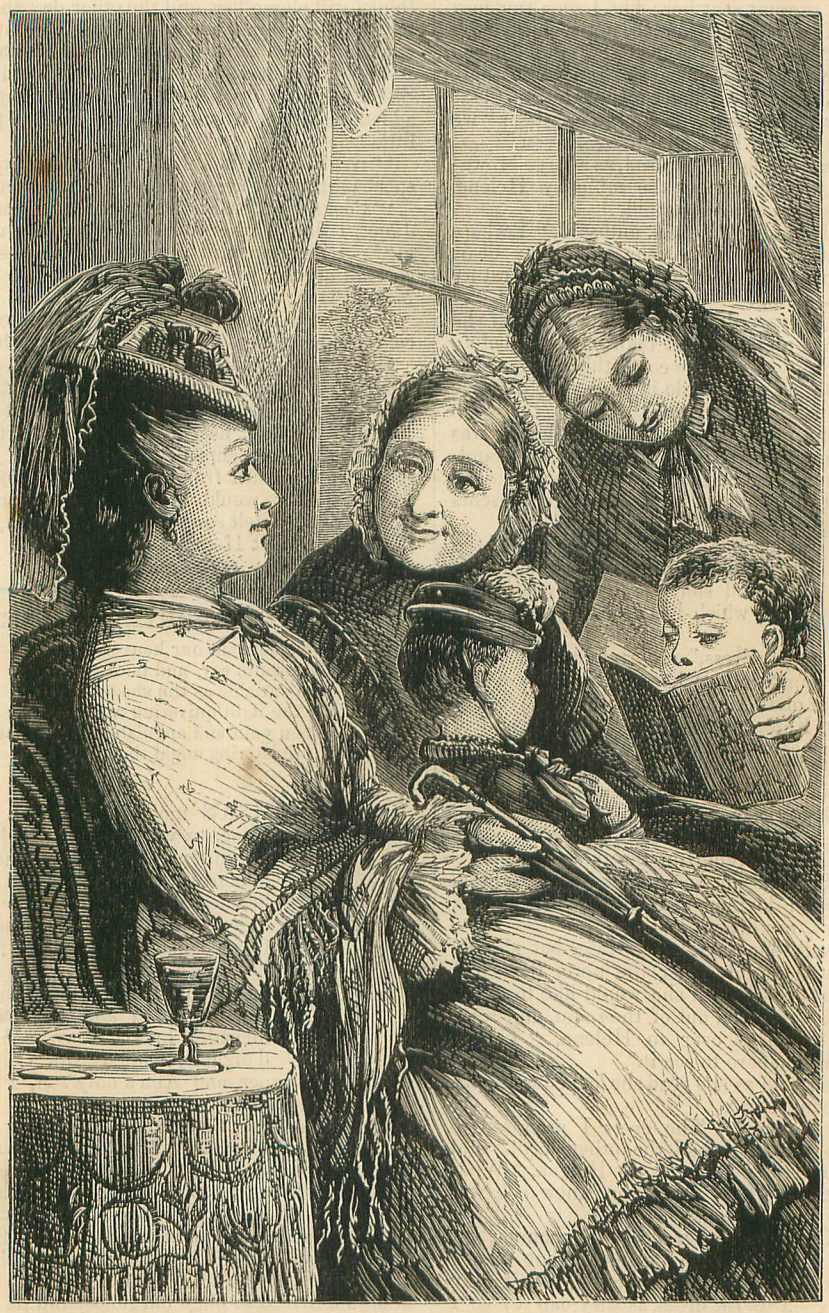
A MINISTERING ANGEL.

'O woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!'

CHAPTER I.

LOUISA'S mother lived in a watering-place, to which rich invalids resorted in winter. Mrs. Cooper had been a laundress, but had retired from the business, and had sold the good-will thereof, and the washtubs and mangle, for she had made a little fortune by her industry. She lived in a cheerful house, in a street which joins the two most crowded and fashionable promenades in the town. A widowed daughter, named Ann Gibson, lived with Mrs. Cooper, and Ann's only son, Philip, completed the household.

Louisa, at the time when our story opens, is nurse in a gentleman's family. Her master, Sir Edmund Blancheville, is a widower, with one boy about Philip's age. Lady Blancheville died of consumption a year ago, and little Ernest is motherless, and doomed to such moulding as Louisa Cooper can give. Sir Edmund does not find so much solace in his boy as in his books. He is a man who lives whole hours immersed in huge old folios, and he would forget even his meals, did not the prim butler come in every day and say, 'Sir Edmund, dinner is on the table.' This has to be said sometimes twice, and sometimes three times. People wonder what Sir Edmund is looking for in his Greek and Latin books. The gardener cannot think what charm detains him



in his dull study, when the garden is all aglow with roses; and the gamekeeper vows he'll turn poacher of the pheasants he has reared if Sir Edmund does not have Lady Blancheville's brother, the captain, down at the Hall, with a party, to kill them off.

This state of things may explain how it is that Louisa, the young nurse, has sole control over Master Ernest, the heir to all the Blancheville estates.

One day Sir Edmund, in a wakeful moment, forgot the Crusades and the pedigree of Robert Guiscard, and embraced his little pale-faced boy. Ten minutes after that endearment Louisa was summoned to the library, and there, in the presence of Homer and

Bacon, Plato and Thomas Aquinas, whose busts adorned the book-cases, she was sent to Wellingham with a liberal supply of money, and with strict orders to bring the roses into Master Ernest's cheeks. Thus it happened that Louisa, not a little proud of her duty, came and sat in her mother's parlour; and thus it happened that Ernest Blancheville and Philip Gibson met face to face; Ernest with his back planted firmly against his nurse's knee, and Philip hardly needing his mother's help to admire the purples and yellows, the reds and greens, the blues and oranges, in his new picture-book, a gift sent by Sir Edmund in a second very wide-awake moment to the nephew of his valuable servant, Louisa Cooper.

CHAPTER II.

Good as Louisa's place was, she would not keep it. As the dog dropped the certain lump of meat to grasp the shadow, so did Louisa leave the certainty of a capital home where she was valued, for the house of a man who said he would make her very happy indeed. She believed him, and thought a small brick home with Jim, in a smoky back-street, was more to her mind than Ettleswick Hall; and so she left Sir Edmund's service, and little Ernest, who loved her as a mother, and was married to Jim Underwood, a clerk in the great Ettlesford iron-foundry.

Sir Edmund was plagued a good deal by Louisa's decision. The choice of a new nurse for Ernest bothered him, and interfered very much with his great essay, 'On the Reason why Snail-shells are found in Anglo-Saxon Graves.' That important question was being hotly answered when Louisa announced her intentions; and for one whole fortnight the buried snail-shells were undisturbed. But nevertheless Sir Edmund, though inwardly thinking Louisa silly, honoured her with a great wedding. He invited her mother and sister to the festivities which took place at the Hall, where a handsome dinner showed publicly his respect for a faithful servant.

Mrs. Cooper was not well enough to leave home, but Ann Gibson went, and with her one of Louisa's old friends, who played the bridemaid's part.

Louisa's bridal attire was costly, and beyond plain Ann Gibson's ideas of what became the wife of a clerk in a foundry; so she spoke her mind about it in her own plain way to Louisa, as she stood a happy bride with a nosegay of hothouse flowers in her hand, and her white veil drooping behind her. Ann, simple in face, in name, and in speech, bade her sister be happy: but 'do not trust, dear Louisa,' said she, 'in to-day's sunshine; dark days will come, my dear, and storms. I hope your love is true enough to weather them all. And beware, Louisa, of being dressy. The time for finery is now past; the woman who is married must care for her husband——'

More would Ann have said had not her feelings overpowered her. The memories of her own married life, and her dead husband's face and his lowly grave, ended her sisterly sermon, and perhaps it was as well. Louisa, not sorry to escape, went to be the queen of the marriage-feast in the servants' hall. Nothing was forgotten that could mark the occasion as a 'white day.' Louisa had done her duty, and Sir Edmund had given his house-steward full permission to make the most of the wedding.

The bride was happily toasted by Andrews, the head gardener, who had no mean fame as an orator, and with a bountiful hand did he strew the flowers in her path. The bride blushed and hung down her head, and whispered endearments to little Ernest, who had come in to see the fun. I believe Sir Edmund enjoyed the quiet time in his library, and had a good two hours with the snail-shells, whilst all his household were as merry as a wedding-feast could make them. He could hear the clapping of hands and cheering which marked the toasts. One special outburst he thought might be in honour of himself. He was still groping for truth in a Saxon chieftain's grave, with a dozen snail-shells before him, which had been found in a green hillock, together with iron rings, copper bowls, and a double-edged sword, when little Ernest came in flushed and excited.

The wedding-feast was over and the guests were strolling about the garden, where Mr. Andrews was in his glory, airing his knowledge and confounding his hearers with almost endless names.

'Father, may I stay up and see the dance?' asked Ernest. 'Oh, where did you get those old snail-shells?'

'Yes, Ernest, dear, you may see the dance, but mind Mrs. Phipps puts you to bed at ten o'clock. Go now, my boy, for I am busy; but come first, and give me a kiss.'

(*Concluded in our next.*)

LABAKAN.

(*Concluded from page* 231.)

As they proceeded towards the capital, throngs of people poured out of the towns and villages to see the future king of Abyssinia. Triumphal arches were erected in his honour, flowers strewn on his path, and good wishes showered on his head. But he who was the real cause of this rejoicing was fettered in chains, and if one of the spectators asked the name of the unfortunate prisoner, like a death-knell the answer sounded in his ears—'A mad tailor from Alexandria!'

At length they entered the capital and reached the royal palace. The queen sat on her throne surrounded by the ministers and her maids of honour.

Proudly the king led his son towards his wife, but she, when she had examined his face, drew back disappointed, so unlike was he to the picture she had formed of her son in her own mind, and so little did he resemble the child she remembered so well.

'Alas! he is not my son!' cried she at length, hiding her face in her robe, and breaking into a flood of tears.

At that moment the door was flung open violently, and Omar, who had escaped from his keepers, rushed into the room and threw himself at the feet of the queen.

'I will die here,' cried he, wildly, 'rather than suffer the disgrace I am daily subjected to. I am not a madman, but the rightful heir of Abyssinia.'

The king looked angrily upon the intruder. 'Take him away!' said he, sternly to the keepers who had followed Omar. 'It is a mad tailor from Alexandria!' added he, turning to the queen. 'Here stands our son, who brought me the sword!'

'He stole it,' gasped out Omar, as he was led away.

The king frowned. Yet still the queen refused to acknowledge Labakan as her son; 'For,' said she,

'my heart refuses to own him, he is so unlike my son.'

In vain the king argued; the queen persisted, and at length the king dismissed the assembly, and with Labakan retired to his own apartments, trusting that in time the queen would see the folly of her obstinacy.

Weeping, the queen retired too; in vain her maids tried to console her; the poor disappointed mother would take no comfort.

At length an old slave, who had been the nurse of the prince, proposed a plan to her royal mistress through which to discover the real prince. 'Set them both a task!' said she. 'Tell them to make a robe after the newest fashion, and he who is the best workman will show himself to be a tailor and deceiver!'

The queen willingly agreed to this plan. 'But how gain the consent of the king?' said she to the old woman. 'I have sorely offended him this morning, and I am afraid he will refuse my request.'

'You must first beg his forgiveness,' answered the old nurse, 'and then he will agree to all that you wish!'

Accordingly the queen went to the king's apartments, who readily consented to her request, for he loved his wife dearly, and repented him of having spoken so harshly to her in the morning.

'Let each one,' said she, coaxingly, 'make a robe after the newest fashion, and whosoever completes his task to my satisfaction will most delight a mother's heart.'

The king promised to acquaint both the young men with her wish, and though he shook his head at this new freak of his wife, he hurried to Labakan and besought him to humour his mother and try to manufacture a robe after the newest fashion.

The tailor's face beamed with satisfaction. 'How I will gratify the heart of my royal mother!' said he to the king; and asking for velvet, and silk, and cloth, he set to work to make a more splendid dress than ever had been turned out from him in former days. The king had decreed that two days should be allotted them for their task, and on the morning of the third day the king and queen assembled their ministers to sit on judgment on the two robes.

Labakan advanced triumphantly, and laid down his exquisite piece of workmanship at the foot of the throne.

Omar was led forth by his keepers; he walked as one in a dream, and carried in his hand his scissors and the various stuffs sent to him. He deposited them, too, at the foot of the throne, and turning to the queen said, 'I have been taught to curb my horse and throw my lance; I can shoot down an apple from a tree, but I have never learnt the use of the needle and of scissors! These are occupations unworthy the son of a king!'

'Thou art my true son!' cried the queen; and descending from her throne she threw her arms round Omar's neck. 'My heart tells me this time I am not deceived!' And then turning to the king and to the ministers, she disclosed to them the trick she had used to discover the real tailor, who now by his exquisite workmanship had betrayed himself.

The king turned angrily towards Labakan, who was ready to sink into the ground with shame and disappointment that he had so readily fallen into the snare.

'What!' cried the angry monarch, 'art thou indeed a deceiver, and was I thy dupe? Thou shalt pay for thy deception with thy life!'

'Spare him,' cried Omar, approaching his royal father; 'the disgrace is punishment enough for him. Let not a day that brings me such happiness be a day of bloodshed. Pardon him, I beseech thee!'

'Have mercy upon me!' cried Labakan, throwing himself at the feet of the king.

'Go then, miserable liar!' said the ruler of Abyssinia: 'but for my son's generosity thou shouldest not live an hour longer!'

'Ah, he is my true son!' cried the queen, turning to Omar, 'truthful, and brave, and generous to a fallen enemy!' And a burst of applause from the spectators filled the hall.

'Leave us at once!' once more spake the angry king. 'Leave my dominions for ever; but take this lesson with thee, that true greatness consists in the conscientious discharge of the duties of our station, not in aping the dress of those above us; but remember that the success of the liar is but short-lived.'

Labakan crept quietly away; he went to the stables to saddle his own lame mare, and rode out of the gates of the capital.

He now saw the guilt and the folly of his conduct, and deeply did he regret ever having taken the robe and left his kind master. He determined to seek his old master and request him to forgive him and take him into service again. He travelled back to Alexandria and went crest-fallen to the house of the old tailor, who, taking him for a new customer, received him very politely. But when he found him to be his former assistant, who had so basely defrauded him, he called his helpers, and they all in a towering rage fell upon him. They beat him with their yard-measures, and told him not to show himself unless he brought money for the robe he had stolen, and then they thrust him out of doors.

Labakan was in sore distress. 'Oh, if I could but become an honest tailor again,' sighed he, 'I would never tell an untruth!'

After being turned away from several tailors where he asked for employment, he at length found work in a large clothier's shop, and there, fully repenting of all he had done, he remained for some time. When he had earned a considerable sum of money he returned to his former master, and begging him to take the money he had earned, he besought him to take him again into employment.

He was once more accepted, and now by steady work he gained the confidence he had lost. He was never known to speak an untruth again, and he found his happiness in the duties and pleasures of his station.

CHARLES LAMB AND THE POETS.

SOME one was praising our public schools to Charles Lamb, and said: 'All our best men were public-school men. Look at our poets. There's Byron, he was a Harrow boy——'

'Yes,' interrupted Charles, 'and there's Burns—he was a *plough-boy*.'

"Have mercy upon me!" cried Labakan.

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Chatterbox.

A Sociable Donkey. By Harrison Weir.

A SOCIABLE DONKEY.

SOME time ago a donkey having been hired to work on a gentleman's property in Suffolk, was turned out in a paddock in company with a cow and a pony. This new life suited him very well, so long as his agreeable society remained. After a time, however, the cow was removed to 'fresh fields and pastures new,' and the pony had to be shot owing to his old age; so 'Jacob' was left in solitary possession of the paddock. A lonely life was not at all to his mind, and he determined on returning to his old quarters. Opening the gate of the paddock by some unknown ingenuity he trotted through the park, again unlatching two gates on his way, and visited his master in the village. He was brought back to the paddock the following morning, and the fastenings of the gates were secured, but the same afternoon he was found to have disappeared again. It is evident that 'Jacob' declines to live by himself, and in consideration of his services and his amiable disposition he will in future be allowed the companionship of the cow.

L. E.

AMONG THE ANIMALS.

ONE rainy morning,
Just for a lark,
I jumped and stamped
On my new Noah's Ark:
I crushed an elephant,
Smashed a gnu,
And snapped a camel
Clean in two;
I finished the wolf
Without half trying,
And wild hyena
And roaring lion;
I knocked down Ham,
And Japhet too,
And cracked the legs
Of the kangaroo;
I finished, besides,
Two pigs and a donkey,
A Polar bear,
Opossum, and monkey;
Also the lions,
Tigers, and cats,
And dromedaries,
And tiny rats—
There wasn't a thing
That didn't feel,
Sooner or later,
The weight of my heel:
I felt as grand
As grand could be—
But, oh, the whipping
My mammy gave me!

From 'Rhymes and Jingles.'

A MINISTERING ANGEL.

(*Concluded from page* 238.)

CHAPTER III.

JIM UNDERWOOD was an honest, God-fearing man, but exceedingly vain. Can such a thing be as a God-fearing yet vain man? Yes, reader. We do not present you a perfect husband for Louisa, but, as old Latimer would have said, 'a mingle-mangle;' an honest, God-fearing, but very vain young man, who needed a sore rebuke. We pass over the honeymoon, and we hasten on to a quarrel, or difference, which took place between Jim and Louisa ere they had been united a twelvemonth. Jim was always dreaming of a fortune to be made in a lottery. Jim had qualms of conscience which he quieted by means of certain reasons of his own, and a letter was written, applying for No. 3758 of the great Hesse Carlsbad lottery. The prizes in this lottery glittered in his eyes, and he was already building castles in the air, and robing Louisa in velvet and pearls.

The letter of application for No. 3758 was duly written, signed, and wafered, and intrusted to Louisa, who willingly promised to inquire at the branch post-office round the corner what the postage would be, and to send the letter off, or it would be too late for the drawing. Jim would rather have done this himself, but that was out of the question, for he had to start next morning, while it was yet dark, to a place in Norland, where his firm were delivering iron rails. The day was stormy, the country was bleak and cheerless, the hill-sides were enveloped in mist, and Jim's patience, never over-abundant, was largely taxed. Jaded and weary, he reached his little home, and Louisa, anxious at the delay, was overjoyed at her husband's appearance.

'You remembered the letter, Louisa?' said he, before he hung up his damp hat and put on his slippers. A sudden change clouded his wife's face, and she sat down without saying a word. She had forgotten it. And yet, how often during the day had she thought about it! A tart rebuke, uttered in a very high key, produced their first serious quarrel. The temper-trying hours on Windy-gorge Waste had chilled and exasperated Jim, and Louisa's neglect of her one small duty was too much. He ventured to contrast his hard day's work with hers, and he ended his words with sharp reproaches. Louisa was in tears, hurt to the quick by his treatment.

'Had I betrayed your honour, Jim,' said she, 'you could not have been more severe! What so great harm is done? Perhaps some day you will thank me for saving you from loss and disappointment. I did mean to post the letter, of course; but, like you, I have been very busy, for I have been washing the whole day long, and the letter slipped my memory, and I am very very sorry but you are so——'

Here the words came to an end; perhaps Louisa meant to end the sentence with 'cross,' or 'unfeeling,' or 'unjust,' but the ill-favoured adjective was lost in a

sobbing fit, during which Jim made, or tried to make, his disconsolate supper, and the cheerful little room, that might have been so bright a contrast to Windygorge Waste, was dim and dark and uncomfortable with ill-humour, regret, reserve. All night they sat silent. He was too proud to make advances and apologies. She was hurt and angry, and yet they loved each other much and tenderly.

CHAPTER IV.

TIME flew by, and Louisa had many opportunities of proving her Jim's exacting temper. She bore the trial as well as she could, and all the better because she not only loved Jim, but admired his many excellent qualities. He was truthful, sober, a keeper at home, and by no means unkind or inattentive to her; but his fault appeared all the more glaring, like a dark object on a field of snow, or a rock with the glory of sunset at its back. To find fault with other people, his wife included, and to crack up himself, he seemed to consider one of his chief duties. He had been much spoiled by his mother and sisters, who were silly enough to extol Jim Underwood, until he verily believed himself perfect. When he married, of course he expected from Louisa the same admiration which his feminine relations at home had lavished on him, but in this he was mistaken. Louisa was loving, but her manner was cold, and her compliments sparing. She felt much more than she said. But Jim could not bear this. He feared that he had made the mistake of marrying a woman who did not care for him. He was, however, soon to receive a lesson, which gave him both a more correct knowledge of himself and of her who was now his other self.

Mr. Ferrers, one of the principals of the firm, was in Spain, tunnelling a spur of the Pyrenees, and Mr. Evans, the other partner, was disabled with a broken leg. Young Mr. Lionel Evans had a world of care on his shoulders, which made him look grave and thin. It happened that a representative of the firm was now required in the north, on a certain very important business, and Mr. Evans deputed Lionel to do his best in choosing the proper man. When Lionel, with a young man's timidity, stated the wish of Mr. Evans, all the clerks were silent for a space. But at length Jim broke the silence, by saying he believed he was fully master of the job, and would gladly undertake it, if his employers were willing to send him. He said this in his own self-sufficient way, and after Lionel had reported to Mr. Evans it was agreed that Jim should go. A paper of carefully worded instructions was written out by Lionel, and this Jim was ordered to study, and with many warnings ringing in his ears he went his way. Jim read his instructions in a very hurried manner. He was, in fact, rather vexed at the want of confidence which the paper seemed to imply, and he hardly looked at it; in fact, he thought it so little needful that he forgot it, and went without it, nor was it until he arrived at his destination that the importance and difficulty of the business were felt. However, he put a bold face upon it, and trusted to a memory not very accurate, and thus committed his masters to a course which was ruinous. A friend of theirs, who was present, could not understand what madness had possessed the firm; and he made some remonstrances, but Jim assured him that he had the full confidence of the house he represented. So Mr. Rogers had nothing further to say; he supposed his old friends must be possessed of some secret foreknowledge of approaching fluctuations in the trade, or that a speculating mania had laid hold of them, or else that the young man was greatly exceeding his powers, drunk with excess of vanity.

In fact he wrote that same evening to remonstrate with the firm, and begged them to disown, if they could, the acts of their agent. Jim was elated with his work, and took the surprise of the grey-beards around him for admiration. He spent a very pleasant evening at his hotel, and went home the next day. The succeeding day was the anniversary of his wedding, and according to custom he and Louisa went a little trip to the sea-side. They returned after a happy day, spent in gathering shells and watching sails. It was nine o'clock when home was reached, and whilst Louisa was preparing supper Jim took out of the letter-box the one note he found there. It was from his employers, and it gave him a supper he had no appetite for. What was his distress when he read as follows!—

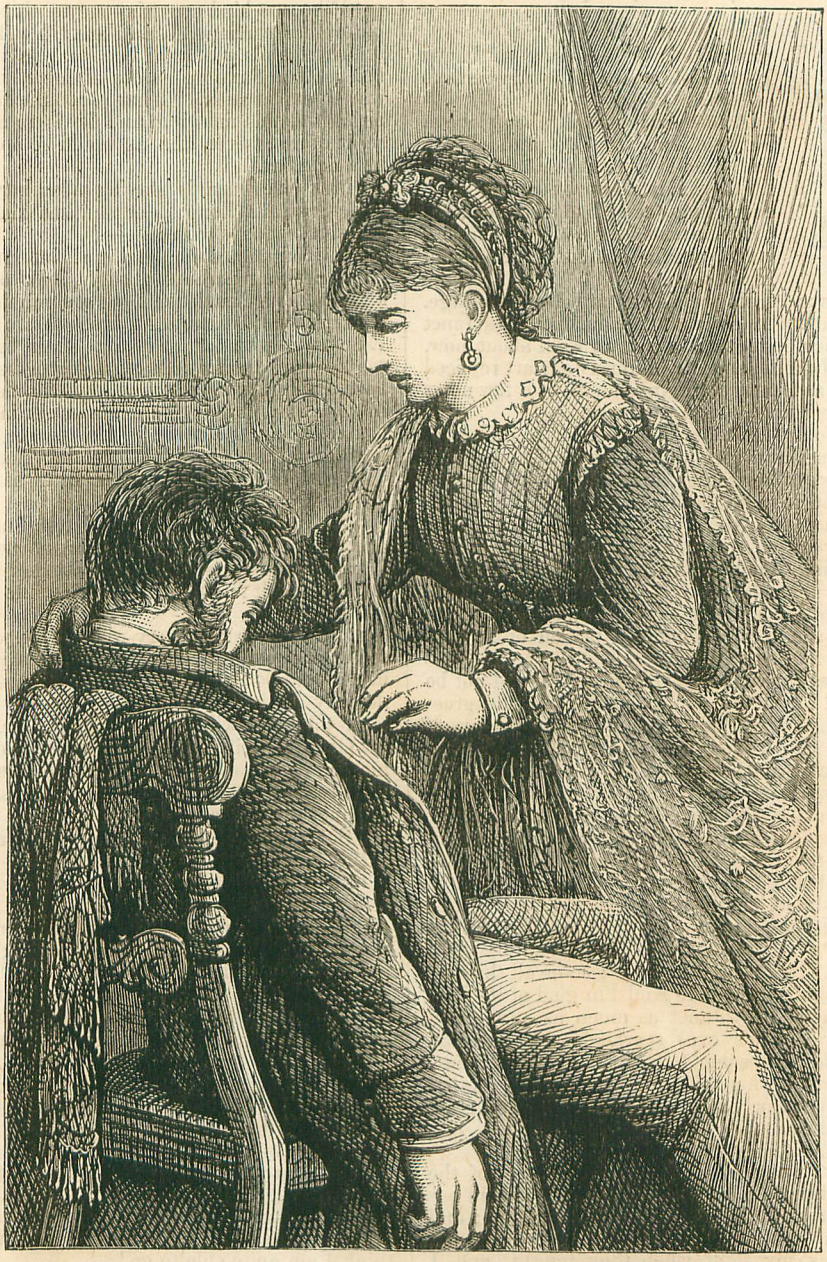
SIR,—In sending you to Barcastle, we supposed we had chosen a man of discretion and integrity. We find, however, you have, it seems wilfully, disregarded our written instructions, and committed us to a course that the veriest simpleton would have avoided. This, too, though we understand from our friend Mr. Rogers that he remonstrated with you on your conduct. Such unwise, if not dishonourable conduct, cannot be passed over, and you may consider yourself dismissed from our service on receipt of this.

We are, Sir,
Yours truly,
FERRERS AND EVANS.

A cheque for his salary up to, and a month beyond the date, fell from the letter, which Jim continued to read long after its contents had graven themselves with an iron pen on his heart. At length he threw himself back in his chair, and gave way to tears. It was now Louisa's opportunity to show she had a true woman's heart. She laid aside all the coldness which veiled her real feelings, and became a ministering angel. She listened to Jim's self-reproaching cries, his exclamations of grief and shame, and she folded her arms about him, and made him feel surprised at the treasure he possessed in so loving a wife. After a while he listened with a dawn of hope to Louisa, who, with a woman's ready wit, shaped out a course and overcame every objection. She would see Mr. Evans; she would explain how it was that the important paper was left behind; she would state how young and how unfit Jim was for the business they had intrusted to him; she would say how much he esteemed his masters, and how their continued anger might be his ruin. The night went, and the morning found Louisa still ready for her hard task. She steeled herself to endure any number of rebuffs. See Mr. Evans she would—plead Jim's cause she would—aye, and with all the eloquent devotion of love; and it will be strange, thought she, if I do not make him take a different view of Jim's misconduct.

Mr. Ferrers had returned, unexpectedly, from Spain, and Louisa's interview with him was stormy. She heard many unpleasant things, but she performed her task without losing her temper or her patience, and she succeeded in her mission.

Jim was restored, but he had to take the lowest room, and to sit below the youngest clerk. And now Jim's religious principles stood him in good stead, and he meekly and thankfully accepted his degradation as a due punishment for his conceit; and his behaviour seemed so softened and amiable, that he became a great favourite with everybody. And when the



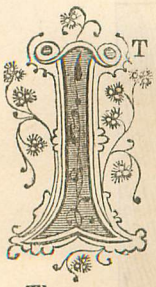
wedding-day came round again another note was found in the box, which announced that, as he had given such satisfaction, the extra twenty pounds he had forfeited were returned; and a few civil words expressed the entire approval of Messrs. Ferrers and Evans, a hope that the connexion might continue, and, lastly, an invitation to a large excursion party given by the firm in honour of the nuptials of Mr. Lionel Evans and Miss Agatha Ferrers; with a special mention of Louisa, who, by doing battle for her husband, had won Mr. Ferrers' regard, and, better still, the confiding love of Jim Underwood.

G. S. O.

THE SISTERS.

(*Continued from page* 235.)

CHAP. V.—JEALOUSY.



It was Easter-tide. Bright, happy Easter, when all the world seems to rejoice.

A few changes had taken place at Kirkton since the autumn. Lilian had gone back to her grandfather at Hatherleigh Manor, but only for a short time, as it had been decided that she should spend her summer holidays with her sister Helena at Kirkton.

There was great rejoicing at Ivor Cottage. Faithful Hester had brought her darling Miss Janet back in much better health, able to walk about now, and in good spirits, and Mr. Ramsay's heart rejoiced within him as a merry, ringing laugh, or a few notes of a song, echoed through the house.

He had found his other daughter but a dull companion during the weary winter months. Kate stood rather in awe of her father, and had allowed an unhappy notion to take root in her mind that he never cared for her to have any pleasure, and that Janet was his favourite.

But during Janet's illness Kate had been of some little importance, as the only daughter who could make her appearance in society. Now she feared that she would sink into a person of no consequence.

Sometimes she would say to herself, 'I will not be overlooked! If I am not so attractive and agreeable as Janet, I will do something to bring myself into notice; I will show my father that I am worth some *little* care and attention!'

One morning, as Kate Ramsay came in from the garden with a few spring flowers in her hand, her curiosity was excited as she passed the window of the sitting-room, in which a quarter of an hour before she had left her sister, by hearing a strange voice—and Janet laughing merrily.

'Who is in the parlour, Hester?' she asked, as she came in.

'It's Mrs. Greyburn, Miss Kate; come all this way to see my young mistress. And I'm glad of it, for it will hearten up Miss Janet as much as anything;' and Hester Brown's eyes sparkled with pleasure. 'A queer old lady, some folk say she is, Miss Kate, but kind enough where she takes a fancy. I was her maid for one year, but I was obliged to leave on account of the cats.'

'Cats!' said Kate. 'What do you mean?'

'Just what I say, Miss; I left on account of the cats! She keeps six in the house, and her maid has to feed them as if they were so many children; and two of them were so spiteful, and she always would persist it was my fault when they fought, and I found it too much for my temper. She's got one of them with *her* now. She carries them about as if they were pet dogs.'

When Kate entered the parlour she saw a curious little old lady sitting very upright on the edge of a chair opposite to Janet. Janet said, 'This is my sister Kate, Mrs. Greyburn. I don't think you ever saw her before. Kate, this is my kind friend, Mrs. Greyburn.'

'Who was kind enough once to throw your sister out of her carriage, Miss Kate. You'll excuse my shaking hands with you, but I dare not leave go my companion, Samson,—a cat of mine,' she added, by way of explanation. 'I have brought him out for an airing this fine morning, and he is so nervous at the sight of a stranger that he would be up the chimney in a moment.'

'Mrs. Greyburn is staying near here, Kate,' said Janet, 'at Mr. Long's, and she has kindly offered to spend a few days with us——'

'Leaving the cats behind me!' interrupted the old lady, noticing perhaps a slight look of uneasiness and alarm on Kate's face. 'I see you don't like cats. You need not be afraid. I brought two of them from Edinburgh with me for change of air, but the wind is too keen for them where I am staying, and it's worse here, I think. And now good-bye for the present,' she said, rising; 'I'll be here about six in the evening, box and all. I must have time to see Samson and Matilda safely off to Edinburgh in a hamper.'

'Janet, is she mad?' asked Kate, as the old lady drove off.

'No! no!' said Janet, laughing; 'not mad, only odd. So kind-hearted, but crazy about cats!'

'But whatever shall we do with her here? Will father like it? You never told me she was so queer.'

'Father knows her very well. It is so amusing to see them together. He takes all she says so gravely, in perfect good faith. And she romances most wonderfully on the cat subject sometimes.'

'I think she will be very troublesome,' said Kate.

'Oh, Kate! if you knew how kind she had been to me you could never think her troublesome!'

'Yes, but, after all, as she says, it was through her you met with your accident.'

'But was that her fault, Kate?' said Janet, gravely. 'How can you say such things?'

'I suppose I may say what I like!' was the sharp retort.

Janet was silent, and so avoided a prolonged dispute. Kate busied herself in arranging her flowers, and not a word more passed between them till their father came in. 'I have just been up to the Hall,' he said, 'and Mrs. M'Gregor wishes you to come up and spend the afternoon with her, Janet; and she also intends to give an evening party in about a fortnight's time, if you think you are strong enough for such a thing. She says she shall put it off if you are not, so that it seems you must go; and she faithfully promises you shall have no more fatigue or trouble than if you were at home. You are to dress and sleep there.'

Janet's face flushed with pleasure as her father spoke, and she said, 'Mrs. M'Gregor is very kind. I think I am quite able to go.'

'You will like a party, Kate?' said the father, turning to his younger daughter.

'Mrs. M'Gregor seems only to have invited Janet,' said Kate, sulkily.

Mr. Ramsay took no notice of her tone and manner, and only said quietly, 'No, the invitation is for

us all. I can't go: at least, perhaps,' he added, looking with tenderness in his eyes at Janet, 'if Janet likes to have her old father with her at this her first going out, I'll try to make my mind up to waste a precious evening.'

'Pleasures are only half pleasures to me unless you share them, father,' was the loving answer.

'Pleasures!' repeated the clergyman, with rather a wondering look: 'then you do call a party a "pleasure," Janet? Then all this time, when you have so cheerfully borne confinement and want of society, you would really have liked to go out as other girls have gone out? My child, I am so thankful you can go. I am so thankful, too, that your cheerful patience deceived me, so that I thought you liked your life almost better than you would have liked a more active one.'

'Ah! father,' said Janet, laughing, 'I am so glad you did not notice my impatience.'

'Then you will accept the invitation for us all, my dear, when you go up this afternoon. Mrs. M'Gregor is coming down in the carriage to fetch you.'

'I suppose I am never expected to go to the Hall any more!' said Kate, as her father left the room. 'Now you are well they will never think of me!'

'Oh, Kate! I really hardly know what to say to you. Do you know that I have only been to the Hall once yet? You don't really mind my going this afternoon, do you?'

'I never said I minded, did I?' said Kate. 'I said I supposed my going there, which was the one poor little pleasure I had here, was all over now.'

Janet did not look quite so much disturbed as she usually did when her sister was cross; she looked more puzzled than disturbed. Kate had been so much more out of temper and pettish than usual ever since Janet had come back from Edinburgh. She could not understand it; an uncomfortable conviction was stealing over her, in spite of herself, that Kate was not glad that she was well again. She could not bear to harbour this thought for an instant, but it would keep coming back to her in spite of her efforts. She answered, now quietly, 'I suppose, dear, my going there will not hinder your doing so? I dare say Mrs. M'Gregor fancies going out will do me good, and I don't think your friend Helena is at home to-day.'

'You seem to know a great deal about their concerns!'

'Kate! Kate!' said Janet, in a tone of real reproof, 'I cannot promise you that I shall not accept invitations there, because I think I must do so. I should have been indeed happy, had our cases been reversed, to see you able to accept invitations, and to go out once more after a long imprisonment!'

A sudden feeling of compunction came upon Kate. 'I know I'm very cross,' she said; 'but so many things seem to come at once to put one out.'

'Can I help you with any of them, dear?'

'No, no!' said Kate. 'I shall go out in the garden for a bit. I think I've a headache, and that dreadful woman is coming. I do hope you will be back by six o'clock.'

'I don't think you will find her dreadful at all, but I will be sure to be back in time to receive her,' said Janet, kindly.

CHAPTER VI.—THE EVENING PARTY.

LETTER from Helena St. Aubyn, Kirkton, to Lilian St. Aubyn, Hatherleigh Manor:—

'*Kirkton, Wednesday.*

'My dearest Lilian,—I am sure you would like a description of our party last night, and I am going to try and give you one. We had about forty guests, and I think they enjoyed themselves very much. We had some music and singing, as well as dancing. Shall I tell you who looked best of all the girls there? Perhaps you can guess without my telling you, for you remember we used to think Janet very pretty, though she was so pale and delicate. Both her dress for the evening and Kate's were given them by the funniest, queerest old lady in the world, who has been staying with them lately, and who came to the party with them last night—a Mrs. Greyburn. Janet had some lilies in her hair; Kate, scarlet geranium. But I don't know that one noticed Janet's dress so much as her sweet face. She did look so happy; and dear old Mr. Ramsay followed her about with his eyes as if he could have eaten her up. I went up to him once in the evening, and said, "How nice it is to have Miss Ramsay here, looking so well!" He answered me so eagerly, "She is so like her mother. It seems as if her mother, my wife, was standing before me once more." And then I said, "She does not look as if she had been ill so long." And he said, rather hastily, "I don't know that. I can't say that. She has too bright a colour to-night. I'm afraid she is almost as delicate as the most delicate flower in your hothouse, Helena." I felt sorry I had said anything about her health, for such an anxious look came into his face as he answered me, and I did not see it leave him till he had persuaded her to go to her room, which she did directly after supper. She slept here that night, as grandmother thought it safer for her. Uncle James and Uncle Donald helped Mr. Ramsay to take care of her, especially Uncle James, who was very kind to her indeed all the evening.

'Grandmother talks a great deal about your coming back to us: I don't think she will be content to wait for you till July. I can't get granny to tell me whether we are to leave Kirkton or not this summer. I think it is more than likely that we shall stay at home, for granny does love Kirkton so dearly. Now, dear, I am so sleepy, good-bye. Your very loving sister,

'HELENA MARGARET C. V. ST. AUBYN.'

(*To be continued.*)

PROSE AND POETRY.

IT was William Hazlitt who wrote—'Books wind into the heart; the poet's verse slides into the current of our blood. We read them when young, we remember them when old. We read there of what has happened to others; we feel that it has happened to ourselves. Books are to be had everywhere cheap and good. We breathe constantly the air of books. We owe everything to their authors, on this side of barbarism.'

Janet introducing her sister to Mrs. Greyburn.

'THE PRIZE' for Girls and Boys. Price One Penny every month.
May be had everywhere.

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Chatterbox.

Mr. Ramsay in the sick-room.

THE SISTERS.

(*Continued from page* 247.)

CHAPTER VII.—CLOUD AND STORM.

IN the pretty sitting-room at Ivor Cottage, a week having passed by since the evening party at the Hall, Kate and Mrs. Greyburn were alone. There had been various skirmishes between them during the three weeks Mrs. Greyburn had been staying there, now there was something like open war.

Janet was ill—ill and in bed: and Mrs. Greyburn, who had intended to leave them three or four days ago, had prolonged her stay to see what she could do for the sick girl.

It was well she did stay. Kate would have gone on after the old fashion, neglecting and leaving her sister alone all day, if her interest or her pleasure called her elsewhere.

But she could not do that now, Mrs. Greyburn expressed such surprise whenever she found Janet in any way neglected. And it was well for Janet. There had just been a spirited war of words between Mrs. Greyburn and Kate, arising from a difference of opinion on the cause of Janet's illness; Kate declaring it was the party that had made her ill, and all the going out and excitement, 'to which Janet is quite unused,' she said, scornfully, with a toss of her head. Mrs. Greyburn, on the contrary, stating it to be her opinion that it was 'the worry of her daily life, which was enough to drive any girl out of her senses.'

'I tell you what I think plainly enough, Miss Kate,' she said, 'for it seems to me that you have no one about you who would tell you the truth. I never heard a girl so worried and tormented as poor dear Janet is.'

'Do you mean,' cried Kate, with flashing eyes, 'that I worry and torment my sister? I really think you go a little too far, Mrs. Greyburn.'

'I am an old woman, my dear, and old women are privileged to speak their minds sometimes. I think you do torment your sister. I dare say you do not intend to torment her. I dare say you are not really so selfish as you make yourself out to be.'

'I'm sure I am not selfish, Mrs. Greyburn!'

'Are not you, my dear? I am glad to hear it. I only speak of what I have seen and heard since I have been here, and that is quite enough to assure me that, whether you mean it or not, you do worry your sister; and I warn you that very little more of it will undo, I greatly fear, all the good effected last winter. Janet is very delicate now, but I believe she would soon get strong if she had the chance.'

'Then you mean to say, Mrs. Greyburn, that I stand in the way of Janet's getting well? It is too outrageous!'

'Come, come, my dear, it is no good getting cross with me. You leave your sister free from worry and fretting, and I shall be quite contented.'

Mr. Ramsay's entrance at this juncture put an end to the conversation, and Kate, greatly affronted, left the room; not, alas! to bear her well-merited reproof in silence, but to vent her displeasure upon poor Janet. Why did not Mrs. Greyburn go up to Janet's sick-room? What made her leave her without any protection for two hours after her interview with Kate? Ah! if she had only known, had only guessed what was going on there, much trouble might have been spared them all!

But Mr. Ramsay was so full of a new book he had been reading aloud to them in the evenings, and in discussing its merits with Mrs. Greyburn the time slipped by so quickly that the entrance of Hester with the tea-things only made them aware of the fact that the afternoon had passed away. Mrs. Greyburn turned to the servant,—

'Have you been to Miss Ramsay's room lately?'

'No, ma'am. I heard Miss Kate go to her, and I thought, if anything was wanted they would ring.'

At that instant Kate entered, looking bright and cheerful, in her blue silk dress, her hair arranged with unusual care.

'What is going to happen to you, Kate?' asked her father. 'Are you going out to another party?'

'I am going up to the Hall, to spend the evening with Helena; they have several friends staying there. I am not going till half-past six, so I can pour out tea for you first.'

Kate had answered her father more graciously than usual. She had vented her anger upon her sister. She was well dressed, in the dress that she delighted to wear at the Hall, in order to show Mrs. M'Gregor that she had been wrong—that the dress was of great use after all.

'You look very neat, my dear,' said Mr. Ramsay.

Kate laughed. 'It's a wonder to hear you praise my dress, father; but I aim at looking rather more than neat.'

'Nice, I suppose,' Mr. Ramsay said, with a look of pleasure at getting a cheerful answer from his daughter. 'Have you seen Janet lately?'

'I was with her till within the last half-hour, when I left her to change my dress. She is all right, I think.'

All right! was she? Hester told a different tale when she came running down-stairs, five minutes later, with the tidings, 'Miss Janet doesn't know me! My darling Miss Janet, that I've nursed for so long, doesn't know me!'

'Not know you, Hester! What do you mean? You're talking nonsense!' cried Kate.

'No nonsense, Miss Kate,' the woman answered, almost fiercely. 'I took up her tea. She doesn't know me! She's talking wild!'

In a minute they were all in her room. The poor girl lay upon her bed, tossing about her arms in feverish excitement, her eyes bright, her cheeks burning. Her gaze rested for an instant on Kate. 'I don't speak against her, I don't! Tell her I never did! I do love her—I am so sorry, I am—oh!—so ill!' And as her voice grew fainter, all Mrs. Greyburn's energies, which for a minute had seemed stunned, returned.

'Leave the room!' she said to Kate, in such an authoritative whisper that the girl, in her real alarm, dared not disobey. 'Mr. Ramsay, send for the doctor. Hester, bring me vinegar, and the coldest water you can get, and be quick!' and she was at the bedside trying in every possible way to soothe the poor girl.

CHAPTER VIII.—AFTER DARKNESS, LIGHT.

THE next two or three days were days of terrible anxiety at Ivor Cottage. Poor Janet's illness was pronounced by the doctor from Edinburgh, who was sent for by Mrs. Greyburn, to be brain-fever, but it was mercifully a slight attack, and the poor girl was before long able to be moved from her bed to a sofa, where she lay weak and prostrate; indeed, white as any lily, but with her head clear again, and her senses restored to her.

Kate had passed through a time of agony and remorse such as she had never before felt or known. She thought at first that she had killed her sister.

At the beginning of her illness Janet talked of nothing but Kate; begging her to forgive her, begging her to love her, saying she was afraid Kate was sorry she was well again, crying out that she would rather not be well if it vexed Kate. It was pretty clear to the watchers by that sick bed what Kate had done; it needed not her confession poured forth to Mrs. M'Gregor to assure them of what her share had been in her sister's sudden attack of illness. For she had come down to Ivor Cottage the morning after Janet's seizure, and when she had seen the sick girl, and had comforted Mrs. Greyburn and Hester to the best of her power, and had been told that Mr. Ramsay had shut himself up in his study, and would see no one till the doctor from Edinburgh came, she searched for Kate, thinking that the girl must be distressed, not only on her sister's account, but because she was not admitted to the sick-room; Mrs. Greyburn having said that Kate's presence there only excited Janet, and she could not let her come inside the door.

She found Kate, at last, hidden away in a little arbour in the garden, her face buried in her hands. She looked up as Mrs. M'Gregor came near her, and the kind old lady, though Kate was by no means a favourite with her, was instantly touched with compassion. The girl's eyes looked as if she had been crying till she could cry no more, her face was white as marble.

'My dear, come in with me. You can do your sister no good by staying out here and crying.'

'But I mustn't—I mustn't go near her room, and I don't deserve to go in there, I don't! Father won't speak to me!' And she burst into a passion of weeping.

But Mrs. M'Gregor, decided and stern though she might be in her manner at times, had a really kindly heart, and she applied herself to soothe Kate; and she succeeded so far as to persuade the poor girl to walk quietly with her into the house, and then, with much shame, Kate told her the whole story of her bad temper, of her jealousy, of her bitter unkindness to her gentle and loving sister.

'Oh! don't go! don't go!' cried Kate, clinging to Mrs. M'Gregor's dress as she rose to go, after having talked gently and wisely to the poor girl. 'I could not get any of them to listen to me, but you have heard it all patiently, and I do love you, and it has been such a relief.'

'You must not expect them to listen to you patiently. It's a great deal more than you have a right to expect. It's not at all likely they will at present. I will speak to Mrs Greyburn when things are a little quieter. Your father must take his own time. Remember how very grievously you have injured and offended him. We must now give our thoughts to your sister. You say you are selfish. Try to conquer that. Show your unselfishness in this matter. Don't brood over your own troubles. Do what you can to keep house well, and so lighten Mrs. Greyburn's cares by seeing that your father has all he wants. And above all, spend what time you can in praying for Janet.'

Kate was really sorry, really humble, for almost the first time in her life. The darkness seemed to be clearing away, the light was coming—was there—if only those about her would help her a little.

She set heartily to work to follow Mrs. M'Gregor's advice, but after a week had passed she almost felt inclined to give way and despair. There was no admittance for her to the sick-room yet, though she knew her sister was better.

'It cannot be possible that Janet, so patient as she was, has turned against me!' thought the poor girl. 'Can it be that this illness has changed her? Oh, that it could be as it once was again!'

Her father would not notice her at all, and she rarely saw him. He spent almost all his time when indoors in the sick-room, and he took his meals alone in the study. Mrs. Greyburn spoke to her, but very shortly and stiffly, and would not relieve Kate at all by entering upon the subject of her misconduct with her in any way whatever. To all Kate's entreaties to be allowed to go into the sick-room and to see her sister, if but for one minute only and when she was asleep, Mrs. Greyburn's answer was, 'I could not permit it.' And on Kate's imploring her to tell her when this punishment would end she replied,—

'The doctor must say. You cannot be admitted without his leave.'

But Janet herself came to the rescue, just as Kate's misery, which she could no longer disguise, began to excite the servants' pity.

Janet began to ask for Kate, and to wonder why she did not come to see her. They put her off as long as they could, but she began to get nervous and to fear something was the matter, and the doctor said her sister must certainly come in, if it was only for a short time; and then, for the first time, her father spoke to Kate. She was sitting in their little dining-room, trying to work, the tears falling fast over her hands, and nearly blinding her, when the door opened and her father came in and spoke to her,—

'Kate, your sister wishes to see you.'

Kate started up.

'Stop! there is something I wish to say before you see her. I am not afraid of your being unkind to her, but you must not say a word that might excite or agitate her; nor must you allude in any way to anything that happened immediately before her illness.'

'Oh, father,' she cried, 'do forgive me!'

'Your future conduct must prove your repentance,' was the stern answer. 'You have worked yourself up into such a state of agitation that you are perfectly unfit to see Janet now; you must wait

until Mrs. Greyburn considers you fit.' And with these words he left the room.

After her father left her, poor Kate put such constraint upon herself, that in the evening Mrs. Greyburn gladly admitted her to her sister's room. Gladly; for Janet had been distressing herself sorely for the last few hours about Kate—rather perversely, as Mr. Ramsay thought.

The father's heart was very sore still; he could look with no pleasure upon Kate; he could not believe in her repentance; he could not understand why Janet should fret so about her; he had a terrible fear in his heart that it was because she was afraid of the temper Kate might be in when she recovered, if she was so entirely kept out of her room during her illness.

But this idea was shaken when, on paying a visit to the sick-room in the evening, he found Janet looking radiant with new-found happiness, holding her sister's hand tightly in hers; and Kate, sad and humble, with the traces of tears on her face. Mrs. Greyburn was sitting near them. The click, click, of her knitting-needles was the only sound to be heard.

'How are you, my dear?' said the father.

'Oh! so much better now I have dear Kate again. And I promise I won't excite myself; but she must help to nurse me now. I am nearly well, I shall not want nursing much longer; but while I do, I want Kate to take turns with Hester in sleeping in my room at night.' And Janet looked beseechingly at her father.

He turned to Mrs. Greyburn and said, 'I leave the matter in your hands. You have proved yourself to be such a true friend to my poor child, that I feel sure that whatever you decide upon will be right.'

Kate would have begged for his forgiveness and his love again, but she refrained through fear of the agitation anything like a scene would produce in Janet. She spoke to him later in the day when she had left her sister, and he told her he forgave her, though she could plainly see that the wound she had given his loving heart would not be healed yet.

When Janet was fairly well again Mrs. Greyburn left them, and as they settled down once more to the quiet routine of their home life, there seemed to be a greater prospect of happiness for the sisters than there had been before since their childhood, so much was Kate improved by the lesson she had learnt, and so much had Janet's illness brought out her sweetness and unselfishness.

(*To be continued.*)

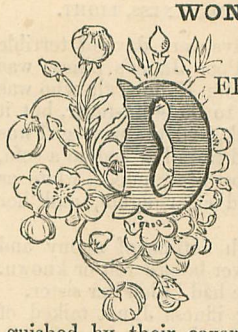
CHARLES LAMB AND THE LADY.

CHARLES LAMB was once sitting next a chattering lady at dinner: he didn't attend to her. The lady noticed that he did not seem to be attentive to her remarks, and she said, 'Mr. Lamb, you don't seem to be at all the better for what I have been saying to you!'

'No, ma'am,' he answered, 'but this gentleman on the other side of me must, for it all came in at *one ear* and went out at *the other!*'

WONDERS OF NATURE,

THE PEAK CAVERN.



DERBYSHIRE is a county rich in natural wonders. Pleasant and varied are its sights above; below, its treasures are many and rare. Of these things we cannot now speak, being bound to the great cavern in the Peak, near the little town of Castleton. The limestone rocks of Derbyshire are distinguished by their caverns,—huge, gloomy hollows, made, it is supposed, by water. The most remarkable of these caverns is that we are about to describe. Upon the rock above this curious place are the remains of a very old Gothic fortress; which was built, tradition says, by one William Peverel, a son of William the Conqueror. Having glanced at its ancient walls, wondering how any one could take it except by starving the garrison into a surrender, we turn to the vast natural arch which forms the rude but impressive doorway of the great cave.

Caverns are, without question, strange, wonderful, and worthy of notice; but they depress the spirits and chill the blood. One looks upwards to the grim, dark-browed roof spread over one's head, and shudders at the thought of its rending asunder and crushing one to death, or, worse still, of its falling down and blocking up the entry, and so entombing one in a living grave. How horrible an idea to be thus buried alive, and to grope about in the pitchy darkness until death came kindly to the rescue! But such fears are perhaps groundless, like so many other fears; as the stone roof of the cavern has been moulded and ribbed by Omnipotence, has been stretched out for ages, and will, most likely, endure for ages,—yea, till the crack of doom!

But let us go on, and be as cheerful as we can. The porch of this temple of nature is of dimensions suited to the rest of the building, being 120 feet wide and 42 feet high. It would have looked a nobler doorway had it been narrower, or more lofty; but, as it is, it is very impressive. After about 100 yards, the roof comes lower, and the path slopes gradually downwards. The passage narrows, and the roof becomes so low that you must stoop as you advance, for some five-and-twenty yards, when suddenly you are in space again. You now arrive at the 'first water;' and here, in days gone by, you traversed one of the most weird and gloomy portions of your pilgrimage, for you had to be ferried in a boat across that dark stream (apt emblem of death), and right under a massive rock arch, which came to within eighteen or twenty inches of the water's face. Here, of course, you were obliged to stoop or lie down almost in the ferry. When this river Styx is passed (it is now managed in a more agreeable way, we believe) you enter a rock cathedral, nearly square in shape, and above a hundred feet in height. The stream running along the bottom widens into the

Peak Cavern, Derbyshire.

'second water,' which can generally be crossed without much trouble. The sound of falling drops now tells you that 'Roger Rain's house' is reached; and soon after you reach in succession various caverns known by the names of 'the Chancel,' 'the Devil's Cellar,' and 'the Half-way House.' Another large opening is bell-shaped, and called 'Great Tom of Lincoln,' a compliment to the bell, certainly. When these grots are illuminated by means of coloured lights, the effect cannot be described; it is very wonderful and fantastic.

The whole length of this wonderful cavern is reckoned to be about 750 yards, nor does it end where the traveller is obliged to retrace his steps. Water, cold and dark, bars your progress. Could you do it, and dare you do it, you might perchance dive into those awful depths, and emerge again in some further cavern, dreary and desolate, where no ray of light, no foot of man, has ever penetrated; which has never been broken by other sound than the trickling or dripping of water, or by the occasional fall of some fragment of rock. Is the thunder, when it peals over Castleton, heard in those caves of night? It may be so; but no lesser voice of nature comes from without to break the monotony of the silent solitudes.

The water which bars the wayfarer's progress is said to be a stream which disappears at a place called 'Perry Foot,' three miles from Castleton, on the Manchester Road. At this spot the stream is lost. It goes down right into the bowels of the mountain; it flows through gulfs and chambers, one after another, and at length, able, if it could speak, to tell a strange story, it emerges into the happy daylight once more, at the entrance of the Peak Cavern, where the rope-makers are busy under the natural shelter of the rock. Sometimes, after heavy rains, the stream is so much swollen that the further part of the cavern cannot be reached.

A still more frightful rent in the limestone rock occurs near to Castleton, and is called 'Eldon Hole.' From the bottom of a first deep chasm extends, lower yet, a second chasm, it is said of depth unknown. To turn away from these gloomy fissures, and to gaze on Mam Tor, and other swelling hills, mantled with verdure, and lit by the sun, is so pleasant that it is worth one's while to spend an hour in the heart of the rock. The exit from the grave, our return from the dark damp passages to the sunshine and sweet air outside, makes us anew to praise our Maker for the free use of such inestimable blessings. G. S. O.

HOW THE TOAD WAS CARED FOR.

A GENTLEMAN who is a great collector of autographs has a very singular one of the Duke of Wellington, which he prizes very highly. The following is a faithful copy:—

'*Strathfieldsaye, July* 27, 1837.

'Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington is happy to inform William Harries that his toad is alive and well.'

An explanation of this singular letter is given on a paper appended in these words:—

'The Duke of Wellington was one day taking his usual country walk, when he heard a cry of distress. He walked to the spot, and found a chubby, rosy-faced boy, lying on the ground and bending his head over a tame toad, and crying as if his little heart would break.

'"What's the matter, my lad?" said the Duke.

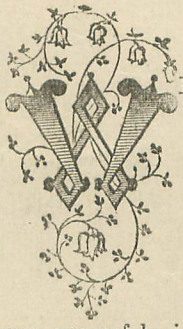
'"Oh, sir, please, sir, my poor toad! I bring it something to eat every morning. But they are going to send me off ever so far away to school; nobody will bring it anything to eat when I am gone, and I am afraid it will die!"

'"Never mind; don't cry, lad. I'll see that the toad is well fed, and you shall hear all about it when you are at school."

'The boy thanked the gentleman heartily, dried up his tears, and went home. During the time he was at school he received five letters similar to that given above, and when he returned for his Christmas holidays the toad was, as the Duke said, "alive and well," but, in accordance with the usual habits of these animals, he was in his winter's sleep, in which he remained until spring and genial weather brought him from his well-guarded hole in the ground.'

LUCRETIA MARIA DAVIDSON,

THE CHILD-POETESS.



WHEN this little girl was born at Plattsburg, on Lake Champlain, in the year 1808, her parents were in great want and her mother almost constantly ill, so that as soon as Lucretia was old enough to understand what passed around her she felt the pressure of poverty in her home. At four years old she had to take charge of a smaller sister, and when the little one was safely in bed Lucretia shut herself up with books and paper, learning to write by imitating printing letters. At this early age she wrote simple verses, illustrating them by some rough drawing, but they were all destroyed, and the first attempt which has been preserved is a poem written when she was nine years old. The great quantity of paper she used led to the discovery of her secret, but she was greatly distressed by the fear of criticism, and tried to give up her beloved pursuit. But she could not do this long—her natural talent would have its way; and she took to writing on the margin of books, in such a way that to any one else the meaning could not be known.

If her father had only had means to give her the necessary instruction, Lucretia would doubtless have been an artist, for her taste for drawing was wonderful; but he was too poor even to supply her with books, and it was with difficulty that she had leisure from household work to read such volumes as she could borrow. All the girl's happiness was in drawing and composition, yet when called from it to fulfil more common duty, or attend upon her sick mother, she cheerfully gave up her pursuits, and devoted herself to what was required.

But in spite of Lucretia's retiring nature, the

knowledge of her talents did not remain altogether hidden, and a gentleman who heard the story of her poverty sent her twenty dollars to buy books. Lucretia's delight was very great, but suddenly remembering the many comforts which were needed at home, she held out the note to her father, exclaiming, 'Take it, dear father, and use it for my mother.'

She was then eleven years old, and having heard some people blame her for her love of study she resolved to give up books, pens, and paper, and keep entirely to household duties; but she grew so ill and unhappy that her mother begged her to write a little, which she could do without neglecting other things.

But at last the noble girl's reward came, when, at about sixteen years of age, a stranger at Plattsburg, who heard of her, proposed to place her at school, where she could have the advantages she longed for. There her teachers loved her, and her companions made much of her, but she soon lost her health and was forced to return home. During her last illness the physicians forbade her reading, but Lucretia would have her precious books laid on her pillow, and often spoke of the joy it would be to open them once more; but that time was not to be, for she grew worse, and in August, 1825, she died before she had completed her seventeenth year. Although she passed from earth so early, the child-poetess left behind her about 278 of her pieces, full of sweetness and beauty, which would have been a credit to one far older than she was. Her younger sister was also gifted, but, like Lucretia, she died quite young. M. F. S.

MY FRIEND.

IN DOGGEREL.

I HAVE a friend I much admire—
I hope you'll think me right—
His eyes and nose are black as sloes,
The rest of him is white.

His manners are not of the best—
Great liberties he takes;
He'll coolly jump upon your knee,
And sleep there till he wakes.

He's doggedly persistent too—
He has no proper pride—
He'll beg, and bounce, and howl, and whine,
But will not be denied.

His voice is far from musical;
I grieve that I must add,
That if he spoke out all his thoughts
I think he'd drive me mad.

When other dogs are heard to bark,
With rage my friend is wild;
But meet his foe once face to face,
No lamb could be more mild.

You'll say that in this history
I've given of my friend,
You can see nothing to admire,
And trust the theme will end.

But stay—you've only heard one side,
There's no one perfect quite—
We all must howl and growl sometimes,
And some of us will bite!

But my dear wavy-woolly friend
Has never yet done so;
When the grey puss spits at him,
He thinks it wise to go.

He oftentimes lies blinking, winking,
His long hair o'er his eyes;
He surely must be thinking, thinking
Of subjects deep and wise.

He has so many loving ways,
And should he see me cry,
He'd lick my hands in sympathy,
And mutely ask me why.

If I had any real grief,
Of which I could not tell,
My curly friend would find it out,
And comfort me as well.

He'd jump up lightly on my knee,
And gaze into my eyes,
And, reading some sad story there,
Lie quiet, being wise.

But I must not forget to say
He's educated, too;
The tricks are counted by the score
That he has learned to do.

If any little folk I know,
When they were eight months old,
Had done the tricks my friend can do,
To 'Barnum' they'd been sold.

Though I have shutters, bars, and bolts,
And great precautions take,
I know the safest thing's to have
My faithful friend awake.

His piercing, shrill, untuneful voice,
Would echo through the house,
Were there a trespasser or thief
No bigger than a mouse.

But if I say 'Come and be washed,'
He shakes in every limb;
And when he sees the soap and tub
Begs not to be put in.

But then the silly little dog,
When he is combed and clean,
Is proud as 'Punch;' who, I am *told*,
Is prouder than the Queen.

He's very fond of scampering,
And round the room he tears,
Nought heeding in his wild career,
O'er footstools, sofas, chairs!

He sneezes often when he's pleased—
Which may seem strange to you;
Not just because he's taken cold,
As people mostly do.

If of his faults and failings
I seem to make too light,
On this one point we must agree—
'His bark's worse than his bite!'

M. R. E.

"When other dogs are heard to bark,
With rage my friend is wild;
But meet his foe once face to face,
No lamb could be more mild."

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Chatterbox.

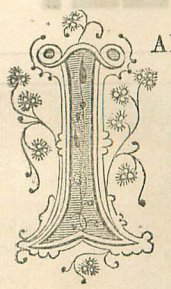
Mrs. M'Gregor questioning Lilian.

THE SISTERS.

(*Continued from page* 252.)

CHAPTER IX.—EXTRACTS FROM LILIAN'S JOURNAL.

'*Kirkton, July 6th.*



AM so very tired, but still I must put down something in my journal before I go to bed, as we have had such a grand day here. Our new church has been consecrated, and the Bishop came here to luncheon, and after luncheon confirmed forty candidates. The church was very full. Dear old Mr. Ramsay was very happy, and Janet and Kate looked so nice at the luncheon in some pretty new muslin dresses sent to them by that funny old lady in Edinburgh. Janet (I ought not to call her "Janet," though, for she is actually going to be my aunt)—well, Miss Ramsay—is engaged to Uncle James, and they are to be married this autumn. But I have heard very little about it yet; for I only came yesterday, and this wonderful piece of news was told me last night, and no one has had time to-day to answer any questions about anything at all. Granny told me, however, that they had only been really engaged two or three days, and that she was delighted about it, as she had the very highest opinion of Miss Ramsay, and was sure she would make dear Uncle James happy.

'Granny said last night, "You must say something to Miss Ramsay to-morrow, Lilian—something pretty and kind."

'After luncheon I saw her standing in one of the bow-windows in the drawing-room talking to Uncle James, and then I went up and said, "I am so pleased you are going to be my aunt, dear Miss Ramsay!" and they both kissed me.

'*7th.*—I thought that Uncle James, when he was married, would live here altogether, but I find that is not to be the case. He intends to live in Edinburgh, and granny seems quite glad he is going to have a settled home of his own there—he is obliged to be there so much as it is. But poor Mr. Ramsay! I should think he would break his heart at having to part from his daughter.

'*10th, Saturday.*—I am afraid I have done a great piece of mischief; but it was done without a thought of any harm that could come. I must tell the whole story.

'On Thursday we were all together sitting under the trees. I mean by "all," Helena, the two Miss Ramsays, and myself. Kate had been reading a new story out to us while we worked, when presently Janet said (I must call her "Janet" till she is married; it is so troublesome to write "Miss Ramsay" every time), "I am tired, and think I shall go home now, but don't let me stop your reading." We all said we did not want to read any more, and Helena said she would walk home with her. Kate and I were left alone under the trees. As soon as the others were gone we talked about Janet's engagement, and presently I said, "But how much you and Mr. Ramsay will miss her!" and she answered, "Oh! I hope not so very much; we shall see her so constantly." I felt rather surprised that she took it so quietly, and said, "Well, there is the railway, certainly; but still Edinburgh seems a tremendous way off." The next moment I saw I had made a dreadful mistake; for her face got first so red, and then so white, as she said, "Edinburgh! Lilian, are you dreaming? Janet would never consent to go to Edinburgh, away from us all! What do you mean? There is a house close by here where I fancied they would live." I wish I had not said any more, but I stupidly went on,—

'"But grandmother says that it is important to Uncle James to live in Edinburgh."

'"He should have thought of that before he asked Janet to be his wife," said Kate; and without saying a word more to me she left me, walking off rapidly towards Ivor Cottage.

'I went back to the house sadly enough, for I was quite sure I had made some terrible mischief. A few minutes after I got in the luncheon-bell rang, and I looked anxiously for Helena as I went into the dining-room, but there were only granny and Uncle Donald there, and a Colonel and Mrs. Field, who were staying in the house.

'"Do you know where your sister is, my dear?" said granny.

'"I think she walked home with Miss Ramsay," I said. I was afraid my tell-tale face would show my anxiety, but no one seemed to notice anything.

'Luncheon was over, and still no Helena. As we rose from the table granny said, "Helen must have stayed to the early dinner at Ivor Cottage, but I like to be told. I wanted her to drive with Mrs. Field and myself this afternoon. Now you had better go, Lilian. Be ready, dear, at three o'clock."

'I went upstairs, and there was Helena, sitting up in the window-seat, with such a grave face and such red eyes. "Helena, my darling!" I cried, "what is the matter? Have you had any luncheon? Where have you been?"

'"Luncheon is no consequence," she said, quite impatiently for her. "I could not come in. I waited up here to see you when you came out. Lilian, do you know you have really been making some dreadful mischief? I should like to know from you exactly what you have been saying."

'When I had told her what had passed between Kate and myself, Helena said, "I thought it was only that; but, O Lily! there is so much mischief done, I'm afraid. I suppose I had better tell you all about it.

'"Well; Kate came home in a great state of excitement, and accused Janet of being anxious to leave them,—anxious for the gaieties of Edinburgh, and a great deal of what I am afraid I must call nonsense. I know if she had only allowed herself to think before she attacked her sister in such a way she could never have done it.

'"I was fearful that Janet would faint, she turned so white; but she managed to control her feelings pretty well, and as soon as Kate would allow her to get in a word she said that this was the first time she had heard anything about living in Edinburgh. 'In fact,' she said, 'I have hardly had time to think where we are going to live.'

'"This brought Kate a little bit to reason again; but in a minute she burst out with, 'But, you see, they have settled it all without consulting you! it's most outrageous of Mrs. M'Gregor!'

'"Janet flushed, but said calmly, 'Kate, you must not! You will be very sorry for what you are saying. You forget in what relation I stand to Mrs. M'Gregor and her son now. They have only, I dare say, talked over different plans, as we should do, between themselves.'

'"There appears to be no choice left in the arrangements,' was Kate's reply. 'Lilian gave me to understand they were quite settled.'

'"Lily, I saw then a shade of annoyance pass over Janet's sweet face; and oh, I am sure I don't know what will be the end of it!" and Helena burst into tears.

'Just then the maid came to tell me that the carriage was at the door, and I had to hurry downstairs. Fortunately, granny was busy talking to Mrs. Field all the time we were out, and seemed to have forgotten Helena. Colonel Field talked to me, and if I had not been so uncomfortable I should have enjoyed it, for he actually knew my father out in India, and told me many things about him; and he asked me about Bernard, my brother, and said he had "always wished to see what sort of children St. Aubyn's children had become." He said, "You ought to be good and high-minded with such a noble father as you had. I like you very much, and your sister; but I should like to have seen St. Aubyn's boy. What is he like?"

'I described Bernard as well as I could; but he said, "I want to know about his disposition, not his face so much."

'I felt rather uncomfortable; for Bernard is troublesome, and not very brave or high-minded. This passed away the time nicely, and when we got back to the Hall I felt brighter.

'When we got a quiet time, Helena told me that she had had a talk with Uncle Donald.

'"Well, Lily," she said, "Uncle Donald says it might not be so bad as we fear; and that an interview between Uncle James and Janet will, he hopes, set it all to rights again: but he also says, that it is a very awkward affair, and that it is very undesirable to interfere in any way between them now they are engaged, and that he is sure we ought to have nothing more to do with it; and that it is a great pity we have in any way mixed ourselves up with it already."

'"I'm sure," I said, "I shall be careful enough in future of what I say about other people's affairs. But how was I to know this would make such mischief?"

'"You could not know, Lilian," said Helena. "You are not to blame, darling. Always be what you are now—honest, upright, unselfish—and whatever trouble comes your conscience, at any rate, will be at peace."

'We saw nothing of Janet or Kate all day. Janet was not at church on Friday evening, and granny stopped Kate to ask how she was. I heard Kate say she had a little headache. Mr. Ramsay looked as tranquil as usual in church; so I expect he knows nothing of any disturbance; and, oh! perhaps it's really blowing over! Uncle James is coming home to-night, and then, I suppose, we shall know.'

CHAPTER X.—THE SORROW OF A LIFE.

But, really, for some time they knew very little. Uncle James's face was very grave, but then he was nearly always grave. The girls noticed that he had one or two long talks with Uncle Donald, walking up and down the terrace; and Lilian felt 'perfectly sure,' she told Helena, 'that Uncle Donald and Uncle James are not agreed about something, whatever it is they talk about. I expect Uncle James will not give up the living in Edinburgh, and Uncle Donald wants him to give it up.'

But Helena stopped her, saying, 'Uncle Donald would have said something to us, if he had wished us to know any more about it. We must try not to think about it.'

Lilian thought that 'was all very well for Helena,' but for herself 'impossible.'

Janet and Kate now and then met Helena and Lilian, but no allusion was made to the engagement, or anything connected with it. Janet had rather a sad, weary look, and Kate was gloomy and dull.

At last, one day Mrs. M'Gregor spoke to Helena. They were sitting at work in a bow-window in the drawing-room. Lilian was at the other end of the long room, playing with a little dog, when she heard her name called.

'Lily, come here. I have been telling Helena something that has been a great trouble to me for the last week or two. I think you are quite to be trusted, and you are no longer a child; so I wish you to hear about it. Your uncle's engagement with Miss Ramsay is broken off for the present, we fear.

Lilian turned so white, that her grandmother said, 'What is the matter, child?'

The girl's answer was a burst of tears, and an exclamation of, 'I knew it would be so!'

Mrs. M'Gregor looked at her in surprise, but continued: 'I don't see how you could have known it, or even guessed it, Lilian; for Janet Ramsay is not at all the sort of girl to talk about such a serious thing to any one but those most nearly concerned; and I believe it is known to no one but your uncles, myself, and dear old Mr. Ramsay. I am not sure that Kate has heard of it yet.'

Mrs. M'Gregor was not looking at Lilian as these words passed her lips, or she would have noticed her look of utter amazement.

'Your Uncle James finds it necessary for his work that he should live in Edinburgh; and he must work—he cannot afford to be idle. My sons'—and here the old lady's voice faltered a little—'must never be idle. Donald has enough to do to manage the estate for me, but James must work at his profession. If they were elder sons, they should never be idle with my consent. But they are not elder sons. You have never yet heard me mention the great sorrow of my life, my children. I speak of it now to warn you. If you, either of you, ever know the great joy of having a first-born son, never make an idol of him in your heart—never spoil him.'

The old lady's face was buried in her hands; but though Helena went and knelt down by her side, neither of the girls dared to speak or interrupt her. In a few seconds she continued,—

(*To be continued.*)

BE IN TIME.

PERHAPS you've read in *Chatterbox* of one you
all know well,
The greatest soldier of his age—his name I mustn't
tell;
And how he beat his enemies he sometimes did
relate—
'I always was prepared for them; I never was too late.'

Now all you little boys and girls a battle have to
fight,
The battle of this life on earth, the war of wrong and
right;
And if you'd like to win in it I only know one way—
You must always be prepared to fight, and never run
away.

And so when you have work to do yet wish to lie in bed,
Remember this great soldier, and like him get up instead;
And never be too late at school, but think it is a crime
Unless, like the great Wellington, you always are in time.

D. F. B.

FETHA THE DWARF.

Translated from the German.

A POOR family of the name of Orlov lived in the beginning of this century on a nobleman's estate on the borders of Russia. The inmates of the cottage were a father, a mother, a blind sister, a deformed dwarf, Fetha, and Iwan. The two elder brothers had fallen in war against the Turks, the parents were too old to work, the blind sister could

only spin, and the dwarf only mind the geese, and thus the support of the family depended solely on Iwan. He was twenty-two years old, of robust health, industrious, and of a loving disposition.

To add to the comfort of the family, Iwan had betrothed himself to Lysinka, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer. She was beautiful and virtuous, and though her parents were in good circumstances they did not withhold their consent to her union with Iwan.

In those dark times a Russian dependant was not allowed to marry without the consent of the landholder, and Iwan, before fixing the day of his marriage, went to the Manor-house to request the permission. To his amazement it was not granted, and no reason was given for refusing it.

In vain the aged parents entreated, the cruel nobleman spurned them from his door; Lysinka was in despair; and Iwan, full of indignation, traced the cause of so much ill-feeling to an event of bygone days.

Years ago two noblemen had passed him at his work one day, one of them the son of his landholder. They were in eager pursuit of a deer, and shortly afterwards Iwan heard cries of distress. He hurried to the spot, and discovered a peasant on his knees, imploring the young huntsmen to spare his crop. But they, angry with the interference, spurred on their horses, and would have ridden over the poor peasant, had not Iwan, angry at such cruel treatment, caught hold of their horses' bridles. Probably he would have shared the fate of the peasant had not an officer of justice passed at the time. He inquired into the subject of dispute, and though the officers gave a wrong account he found out the real state of matters, and the young noblemen were fined. They were furious at the supposed indignity put upon them by a low-born plough-boy, and vowed vengeance against him.

Years passed, Iwan had almost forgotten the circumstance; not so one of the young officers, who meanwhile had come into his father's estates, and waited only for an opportunity to punish the boyish insolence of the dependant.

It now offered itself. He did not stop with the refusal of Iwan's marriage, but he reported him as a refractory servant to the Government, requesting his enlistment among the recruits.

Several officers, unaware of their friend's private spite, assisted in the enlistment. The despair of the aged parents and of Lysinka cannot be described. They pleaded that it was not lawful to take an only son, but the young nobleman pointed to the dwarf Fetha and said laughingly, 'You have a son left to you!'

The day of departure arrived; almost heart-broken Iwan tore himself from his home. His father's silvery head was bowed down with grief, the blind sister shed bitter tears, and Lysinka sickened and fell ill of fever. Poor Fetha, too, was changed; he crept every day to Lysinka's cottage to ask about her state of health. His lightheartedness had fled, he sang no more to the villagers, he played no longer on his basaleika, his favourite instrument. No jest passed his lips, and for hours he strolled in the woods talking and muttering to himself. His parents thought his brother's loss had driven him mad, and left him to himself.

At length one morning he disappeared; mid-day arrived; he did not return; in the evening his parents grew alarmed, and the villagers sought for him all night—but in vain.

After a few days they gave up the search, thinking that wild beasts had torn him whilst searching, as was his wont, for wholesome herbs for Lysinka.

The poor father and mother looked more sad and woe-begone, the blind sister shed more tears, and Lysinka fretted for him sorely. None of them knew till then how dearly they had loved the poor ill-shapen dwarf.

But where was Fetha?

He was wandering many miles from his native village towards the splendid capital of St. Petersburg, weary and tired in body, but his soul full of hope. One day he had overheard a neighbour say to his father, 'If our good Emperor Alexander knew of Iwan's wrongs he would send help!'

The words tingled in the dwarf's ears!

'Could the Emperor help them?' he asked himself every hour of the day, and then he determined to seek his assistance. He asked no questions, for he knew the villagers would laugh and his parents never give their consent. He did not dwell on the difficulty of bringing the misery of the little hut to the steps of the throne, nor on the length and hardships of the journey; he only thought of help to Iwan and saving his parents from starvation, and with a faithful, trusting heart, he set forth on his long and toilsome journey.

On the morning his parents missed him he had walked since midnight on his way to Mittau. In one or two days he reached the town, which he knew was on the direct road to the capital. He partly knew the road, for the produce of the country round was often sent to market at Mittau. There he inquired the way to St. Petersburg; all people looked in astonishment at the cripple with haggard face and bright eyes. He was asked a reason for going so far, and said he was seeking the assistance of a friend who would help him out of his distress. He sang everywhere on his basaleika, and earned a few pence to buy food. As it was in the heat of summer he required no lodging, and the money he earned for his playing and singing was enough to procure his sustenance.

After travelling eight weeks he reached St. Petersburg. The nearer he approached the capital the more wondrous and strange the sights. At length he reached the height that looks down on the Imperial city, and St. Petersburg with its countless domes and towers stretched itself before him. His head grew dizzy and his courage failed him. Was he, the friendless cripple, to venture unaided into the city of wonders and palaces?

Overcome with faint-heartedness and despair, he threw himself on the ground and wept bitterly.

A grocer passed and saw the distress of the poor deformed creature.

'What ails you?' asked he kindly, lifting him from the ground.

'Oh, sir,' answered Fetha, his voice half choked with sobs, 'I have left my native village and tra-

velled to St. Petersburg to rescue my blind sister and aged parents from starvation. A monster in human form has robbed us of our only stay and support. Yet now, near the end of my journey, my heart fails, and I have not courage to enter the large and beautiful city.'

The grocer was startled by his earnest manner, and felt pity for him. He inquired into the particulars of his story, and when Fetha related poor Iwan's sad fate, anger and resentment filled his soul against the cruel nobleman.

'Do not lose heart!' said he to the poor boy; 'your brother is saved if you can reach the ear of the Emperor. I will show you the best way to attain your object.'

The dwarf threw himself at the feet of the kind Russian, and overwhelmed him with thanks. New hope seemed to inspire him. His kind friend promised to do all in his power to assist him, and took him to sleep at his house.

He had to relate the whole story again, and the grocer wrote his account carefully on paper, and promised to lead him where he could present it to the Emperor. Fetha implored his friend not to delay his kind intentions, and he took him the following day to the parade before the Castle. Unfortunately the Emperor had arrived early that morning, and immediately driven to visit his mother. Great was the dwarf's disappointment, which increased when he heard that the grocer had an unavoidable engagement for the next two days. Delay seemed insupportable to Fetha, and he determined to venture by himself the following morning. An hour before the parade he stood waiting before the Castle. At the appointed time the music sounded in the distance; a regiment of dragoons rode past, with gaudy plumes waving on their bright helmets. The horses pranced, yet on a sign of the commander stood motionless in a line.

Horsemen carrying flags followed, and as the music broke forth again from the instruments, the officers lowered their swords and uncovered their heads.

A handsome, stately youth, advanced with a glittering star on his breast; the officers around him were ornamented in like manner.

'Long live the Emperor!' shouted the people.

The dwarf felt bewildered, he had never witnessed such pomp and splendour. The gaudy forms crushed his spirit, and the crowd pushing round him forced him back. Weary and depressed he returned to the grocer's house.

The following morning an irresistible longing drew him again to the parade. He was more familiar with the splendid objects, yet before he collected his thoughts the Emperor had passed him and advanced towards the middle of the palace court. Once more disappointed Fetha stood in the gateway, when to his surprise the Emperor, wheeling round his horse, rode straight towards the gate where the dwarf was standing.

Hope and fear struggled in the breast of the cripple, and crying aloud the Emperor's name he darted forward. The people, thinking him mad, tried to detain him, but extricating himself from their grasp he threw himself at the feet of the Emperor, the precious paper clasped firmly in his hands.

The deformed dwarf attracted general attention; the Emperor looked with pity upon him, and commanded the paper to be taken from him.

Fetha started to his feet, his eyes flashing and his face radiant with joy. The people crowded round him, but his answers were so strange that they still believed him mad. He, however, hurried quickly home, to tell his kind benefactor of his success.

When the Emperor reached his room he asked for the paper. The kind monarch was shocked and grieved at such an abuse of the country's laws: he commanded the affair to be thoroughly sifted. Fortunately the inquiry fell into the hands of a just official. He sent for Fetha, and when he heard the dwarf's account he lost no time in making further inquiries. An officer of justice was despatched forthwith to Iwan's birth-place, and all statements agreed with Fetha's story.

The dwarf was ordered to appear before the magistrate, and received a paper containing his brother's liberation signed by the Emperor. Fetha's joy was boundless; he forgot the people, he only thought of the dear ones at home, and danced, and capered, and cried, and laughed.

The people, full of sympathy with the poor deformed dwarf, inquired his story, and many on hearing it sent him presents of money. The grocer was overrun with customers, all anxious to reward him for his kindness to the poor boy, and scarcely could he provide provisions for his customers.

It had been the Emperor's wish that Fetha should himself carry his letter of release to his brother, and that both should travel home in a royal carriage.

One evening, the well-known sounds of Fetha's basaleika were heard before the little hut where Iwan's parents lived. They could scarcely believe their ears. Iwan and Fetha entered, and the surprise and delight almost overwhelmed them.

The blind sister changed her tears of sorrow into tears of joy. Lysinka soon regained her health, and when she and Iwan were married Fetha was first groomsman, and played merry tunes on his basaleika.

A DOG STORY.

AN almost incredible story comes from Bardstown. It seems that a certain man, previous to the war, was an extensive slaveowner, and each one of his slaves owned one or more dogs. One of these dogs, a spaniel, showed symptoms of madness, and was shot. Now comes the incredible part of the story. Immediately after the shooting, all the dogs in the place collected around the body of their dead companion, and, after a prolonged howling, prepared for a funeral. The largest and fiercest dog took the body in his mouth and started for the woods. The other dogs formed into a regular procession, and in single file followed the body to the woods. They chose a tree just outside of a fence, and at the foot of it dug a grave, in which the body was deposited, and the dogs joined in covering with earth the remains, after which they all united in more howling, which was kept up for some ten or fifteen minutes, when they dispersed.—*American Paper.*

The Dog's Funeral. By Harrison Weir.

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Chatterbox.

Malcolm's Pony returning home.

THE SISTERS.

(*Continued from page* 260.)

THIS sad disappointment about my dear son James and Janet Ramsay has brought back some terrible memories to me. My first-born son Malcolm was a boy full of health and spirits, but as different in disposition from his next brother, Donald, as possible. Donald was generous to a fault, whilst Malcolm was selfish, proud, overbearing; I could not see it then, though I thought he was troublesome. I never would have him found fault with. In all discussions, as the children grew older, I was sure to take his side. It seems now to me that I could look at nothing fairly then. A tutor we had complained of him. Malcolm, in his turn, complained of the tutor; and I sent the tutor away during a brief absence from home of my husband's, telling him politely that he was unfit to manage high-spirited boys. When my husband returned, I never, in all my life, saw him so grieved. I can remember his words now: "My dear love, you were sadly wrong! Do you know Malcolm was greatly to blame?"

'"Have you heard Malcolm's account?" I said.

'"Yes. I have questioned him, and I am sorry to tell you that he was so untruthful that I have been obliged to punish him."

'"Punish!" I cried. "You have never beaten a high-spirited boy like that?"

'"High-spirited!" he almost groaned out; "mean-spirited, I fear, Alison. No, he has not been beaten; I have forbidden him any pony-rides for a month, and I have told Jackson" (our coachman then) "on no account to allow any pony to be saddled for Malcolm until I give permission."

'"Told Jackson!" I exclaimed. "Of course Malcolm would not mount a pony after you had forbidden him."

'"I don't trust him," my husband said, slowly. "But the grievous part is poor Mr. Lloyd. I cannot undo what has been done, but I shall try to get him a better tutorship; and to-day I write to him to say how much we regret Malcolm's bad conduct and untruthfulness."

'I was foolish enough to be angered with my husband for this, although I began to feel frightened about Malcolm, who was now twelve years old; and I remember the words my husband said to me as our conversation ended—I remember them with sorrow and grief: "Take care what you do with that boy, Alison. Don't let him see you take his part any more in the matter, or I have a foreboding that we shall both regret it to the last day of our lives." One day, about a fortnight after his father's return, as I was standing by a window facing the carriage-drive, imagine my horror at seeing Malcolm's pony dash past, saddled and bridled, but with the bridle broken and hanging from his neck! I believe I nearly fainted; but I hardly know what happened to me till I found our old nurse, Elspeth, standing over me with a cordial, which she was trying to make me swallow. I was lying on the couch in the hall. I tried to force my lips to utter the question which rushed to my mind the instant my senses returned to me, but "My boy!" was all that I could say.

'"All safe, my dear lady! lie still," was Elspeth's answer.

'"But how—what—" I began.

'"He is all right, mother," said a young voice close to me; and turning, I saw Donald, with a white face, standing by. "Gipsy threw him off, and he has got some bruises; but he is not hurt much, really."

'"Oh, I must go! I must go to my poor boy!" I cried, struggling to escape from Elspeth's grasp.

'"Run away, Master Donald," I heard her say; "your mother is better now." And then she whispered to me: "My dear lady, the young master is only bruised, and he is gone to his room to change his clothes. You see, it may be a good lesson to him: for, anyhow, he disobeyed his father."

'Then it all rushed back to me—what, for a time, in my terror for my boy's safety, I had forgotten. What had he done? I could never have believed it of him. I believed he was the soul of honour. Just then Malcolm slowly came downstairs.

'"Malcolm, my boy, come here! It is not possible that you took your pony to ride after what your father said?"

'"Well, mother, it's a curious kind of welcome you give one just as one has been nearly killed!"

'"Not nearly killed, Master Malcolm," said old Elspeth. "The Lord in His mercy stood between you and that."

'"Well, anyhow," said my boy, impatiently, "I'm dreadfully bruised and shaken, and no one cares the least about that, all because I did not choose to attend to an unfair order! Of course it was my father's fault entirely. Gipsy hadn't been out for so long, that she bolted, and the old bridle broke, and off I came. I couldn't get a decent bridle, for Jackson had them in his own keeping, and so Charlie had to get me the best he could."

'"Where was Jackson?" I said, sternly enough then, for the effrontery of the boy amazed and pained me.

'"Out with my father, or I could not have gone; and Charlie knew nothing of this beautiful order, I found."

'"That was well," I said, "for he would have lost his place if he had."

'"Mother!" cried Malcolm, "what has come over you? I thought you would be sure to take my part!"

'"Take your part, Malcolm!" I said; "you have been guilty of a disobedient and dishonourable action. I have never known such shame as I know and feel in my heart this hour, when I look upon you."

'"It is very hard!" said the boy; and his bravado deserting him, he began to cry. "Well, I did think my mother cared something for me!"

'I have often wondered at myself since, that I did not forgive Malcolm then and there, or at any rate relent towards him, for my heart was yearning to do so. But there was something—a sentence uttered

by my dear husband the very last time he had talked to me about the children, which was ringing in my ears at that moment, and I could not shake it off. "Remember, these children are God's children," he had said: "we are to train them for God; we shall have to give account." Yes, "we shall have to give account:" that kept ringing in my ears as I rebuked the boy for his grievous sin, and then I ended by saying, "Now go to your room, and stay there till your father returns from his ride, and I hope by that time you will have the grace to make a humble apology for your disobedience." I did not dare look at the boy, who, without a word more, turned and went up the stairs; but when I heard the door of his room close I broke from Elspeth, who was longing and trying to comfort me, and rushing into the library I shut myself in there alone till I heard my husband's voice in the hall.'

Here Mrs. M'Gregor leant back in her chair with so white a face that the girls feared she would faint. In a few minutes the old lady roused herself.

'I have been for some time anxious to tell you this history. I always meant, if I had any grown-up granddaughters, to tell it to them as a warning. And I have another reason for wishing you to hear all about my poor boy. You both knew that you had an uncle older than your Uncle Donald, an uncle whose name was never mentioned in my presence, and I could not bear as you became older that there should be any mystery kept up about this matter. But I need not, I am sure, tell you that this great sorrow of mine is a thing not to be spoken of except entirely amongst ourselves.'

'Oh, dear granny!' cried Helena, 'you need not tell us that. It is so good of you to have let us know all about it.'

'And now,' said Mrs. M'Gregor, 'I must leave it all for to-day; I shall unfit myself for my daily work if I tell you more now, but you shall hear the rest soon. I don't think I have yet told you why your uncle's engagement is broken off. I was thinking of the reasons why it was desirable his work should not be interfered with, and then, I suppose, my mind wandered off to my poor eldest son. You see I'm getting old and wandering.' And a faint smile stole over the old lady's face.

'Grandmother, I'm sure you are not——' began Lilian, but was checked by Mrs. M'Gregor's continuing: 'Your uncle decided, I fancy, rightly, that Edinburgh must be his place of abode, and he thought, I dare say, that as Miss Ramsay has already several friends there, she would not object to going there. However, she has told him that she cannot make up her mind to live at so great a distance from her father, and that she will not hold him bound to his engagement. He says that, though she looked very white as she spoke, she told him this quite quietly. I have not seen her, I hardly felt able to propose to do so; for, to tell you the truth, children, I do not think your uncle has been treated quite well. I don't suppose she really could have cared for him, so I must try to think it all best as it is.'

'Not have cared for him!' cried Helena. 'Oh, granny, she does care!'

'Well, my dear, you must let me differ from you. Uncle James was extremely pained, and at the close of their interview he quite decided with her that it was better to break off the engagement for the present. Whether it will ever be renewed or not, I cannot say. I should think not, but very odd things happen sometimes. Mr. Ramsay has been to see me, and he tells me that Janet's decision has been quite her own, and that though he cannot say he is sorry that he is not going to lose her, he deeply regrets the breaking off the engagement, and the whole turn affairs have taken; and he said he had begged her not to think of him as being desolate or lonely without her, he should often make a holiday to go to Edinburgh and see her.'

Poor Lilian's face was the very picture of despair. She thought, 'It is all my doing! there has been such a dreadful mess made, and nothing will ever come right any more!' Then, catching at her last straw, she said, 'Does Uncle Donald agree with Uncle James about it?'

There was a slight frown on Mrs. M'Gregor's brow as she answered, 'You seem to me rather too inquisitive, Lilian: but it is your way, so I suppose I must excuse you; only, you see this is a very painful and rather a grave matter.' (How 'painful' and how 'grave' to poor Lilian, the old lady did not know.) 'Your Uncle Donald is too good a son to set up his opinion above his mother's in such a matter. But he did not agree with your Uncle James. He thought it would be better for him to leave his wife here for a portion of the year, rather than break off the engagement; and he thought they might have lived here for a time; or, if that was not desirable, Woodside might have been fitted up. I suppose Donald has come round to our opinion now, as he does not say anything more about it. James entirely agrees with me. And now, my children, I have told you of all this painful affair, and we will not talk about it any more. I will, as I said, another day when I feel stronger, go on with the story of my own sad experience.'

And as she spoke the old lady rose, and taking up the knitting upon which her fingers had been employed when the conversation began, she left the room. Helena and Lilian looked at each other for a minute without speaking after the closing of the door. Lilian looked puzzled, but she spoke first.

(To be continued.)

A DOUBLE NEST.

ON the second of May, 1871, the nest of a tree-creeper was discovered built in a disused box in a bee-hive, amongst the comb. By removing a little door at the back of the box we were able plainly to see the nest, with two eggs in it. It continued in this condition till May 29th, when, having occasion to use the box, the nest was taken out, and was found to be a most curious construction. Not only was there the tree-creeper's nest, but, built on to it as it were, was the nest of a titmouse, with thirteen eggs in it. A dead tit was found in the hive. The two nests were joined so neatly that one could not tell where the one ended or where the other began. The tit's nest was lined entirely with cow-hair, the other chiefly with moss and hay, mixed with a little cowhair.

R. V. HODGE.

SUMMER.

THE seeds we sowed in spring-time
Have blossomed into flowers;
The budding boughs of spring-time
Are thick-wove summer bowers;

The water-lily lies at rest
Upon the quiet pool;
The happy year is idle now,
Like children out of school.

Idle? Ah, no! though resting,
Nature is busy still:
And leaf and tree and flower have yet
Some task they must fulfil.

It is God's law the whole world through,
And God's law is the best;
So take it for a rule of life,
Not idle though at rest.

E. M. A. F. S.

London: Printed by JOHN STRANGEWAYS, Castle St. Leicester Sq.

BY THE SEA-SHORE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'EARTH'S MANY VOICES.'

SIGHING because it was weary of peace,
At the foot of the cliff lay the summer sea;
And the cliff it called, 'Come, rouse yourself,
And wrestle with me.'

Then the sea rose up in a sudden storm,
And dashed at the cliff; but wrestled in vain.
'I'm tired of that,' said the summer sea,
And so he fell back quite sulkily
To sighing again.

Then a great green wave came tumbling in,
A great green wave with a curling crest,
And it said, 'If I can but get to the shore
I will stay and rest.'
The great green wave as it touched the shore,
It threw up its curling crest in spray,—
'Oh, that were a very dull life for me!'
And it drew back quick to the restless sea,
Away, away.

Some ships came sailing over the sea:
Some children stood watching them from the sands;
And 'Oh,' they said, 'to sail in those ships
To wonderful lands!'
The children grew to women and men,
And over the seas they some of them went:
But when they came to the wonderful lands
They wished themselves playing again on the sands,
—They were not content.

So the wave, the sea, the heart of the child,
And woman and man, they were never at rest;
It was always for certain the thing they had not
That they thought the best.
—Oh, wave, and sea, and heart of the child,
And woman and man, you were all of you wrong;
Wrong to crave always for things you had not:
Be content, content; make the best of your lot.
—So ends my song.

AMBROSE, THE SOLDIER-BOY.

—o—

ONE winter day, in the beginning of the year A.D. 1743, a little boy was playing in an upper room of a grand house in Paris. It was easy to see that the house must belong to some very rich or noble family, for the walls of this room were hung with crimson brocade; the doors, painted in white and gold, were adorned with coats of arms; glittering chandeliers hung from the carved ceiling, and the quaint oak chairs were covered with crimson velvet; while cups and vases of the rarest pottery stood about on carved brackets round the walls.

A fair, delicate-looking lady, in a blue brocaded dress and immense hoop—the latest fashion of those days—sat at her tapestry-frame, from which she looked up now and then with a smile at the handsome little fellow, dressed in black velvet, with deep ruffles of lace, who was so full of his game that he scarcely noticed her.

The child had a large plan of some fortification spread out on the floor, and with a number of little wooden soldiers he was performing warlike manœuvres.

'Good, very good! my general!' exclaimed the boy to himself. 'If that attack succeeds, you shall be made a marshal of France!'

At this outburst his mother could not help laughing.

'Why, Ambrose,' she exclaimed, 'that will be the third marshal you have made within half-an-hour!'

'True, mother,' replied the boy; 'but would you not have brave soldiers rewarded? Why, just look here: this is the most wonderful stratagem. By retreating to this point here,' and he put his finger on a certain pattern of the carpet, 'my general makes the enemy believe he is retiring. Meantime he brings up his forces across the river yonder, and under cover of night he passes the enemy's outposts, and works round to this centre, so that before morning he is master of the position. But I see you don't understand, mother, for you are looking at the wrong place,' he added, in a tone of disappointment.

'I am sure it is all very good, Ambrose dear,' answered Madame de Boufflers, in a soothing tone; 'but you cannot expect me to understand it all as your grandfather would.'

'No, of course not,' replied the child; 'for, after all, you are only a lady, while grandfather is a soldier and a general. Oh, mother! how I should have liked to have been with him when he was Governor of Flanders, and when all the wars were going on! but now——'

Ambrose was interrupted in his lament by the entrance of his father, the Count de Boufflers, who came in with a hurried step, an open letter in his hand.

'What is it?' asked his wife, in an anxious tone, as she rose to meet him, for she guessed from his manner that something unusual had happened. 'Shall I send Ambrose away?' she added, as the Count hesitated to reply.

'No, no, Marie!' he replied, quickly; 'we have no secrets from our son. It is not on his account, indeed, that I paused and was doubtful how to tell my news; it was for your sake.'

'Tell me quickly!' said Madame de Boufflers, eagerly. 'Whatever it may be, suspense will only make it worse; besides, am not I a soldier's wife?'

Thus appealed to, the Count de Boufflers hesitated no longer, but read aloud the letter which he held in his hand.

It was a brief message from the Minister of War, commanding the Count to leave Paris, and start at once for the seat of war, to join the French army in Germany, which was under the command of the Maréchal de Noailles.

Madame de Boufflers listened in silence, and with a strong effort tried to overcome her emotion at this sudden summons of her husband to active duty—to danger, and perchance to death.

But little Ambrose, who had listened to his father's words with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, sprang from the ground, upsetting all his little wooden soldiers, and exclaimed,—

'My father, let me go too! I will be brave; I will be a soldier like you and grandfather!'

At these eager words the Count smiled, and bent down to kiss his son's forehead.

'Yes, Ambrose, some day you shall be a soldier too.'

'But *now*, my father! try me this time, and let me earn my epaulettes!' he cried.

His mother put out her hand, and drew him towards her; her tears fell fast at the terrible

prospect of some day losing both the father and the son. She put her arms round the child's neck, and whispered,—

'Stay with me, Ambrose! You are too young to think of real war and battles yet!'

But the boy was not to be turned from his purpose. He loved his mother dearly, but all her entreaties could not persuade him to give up the wish of his heart.

'Mother, dear, you will let me go; and indeed you shall have cause to be proud of me!'

Madame de Boufflers looked up imploringly to her husband, trusting that he would never think of granting the child's request.

'Is it not impossible?' she asked him, through her tears. 'Why, our little Ambrose is barely ten years old—too young for anything but his books and his toys!'

'But I have learnt all that they can teach me,' he cried; 'and now it is time for me to put my lessons in practice. Ask grandfather!'

At these words the Count, who had been looking in doubt from the poor mother to the eager boy, was struck with a new thought.

'You have well said, Ambrose! we will ask your grandfather if he thinks you have profited enough from his lessons to go forth and be a soldier.'

'Come with us, Marie,' he added, turning to his wife with loving gentleness; 'you told me even now that you were a soldier's wife: will you not also be a soldier's mother?'

Madame de Boufflers said no more; and when the fine old Duke de Boufflers gave his voice in favour of letting the gallant boy have his way she hid her grief and her fears, and only wept in secret.

There was but little time to prepare, for on the very next day the Count and his son were to start for Flanders.

The poor mother spent a sleepless night, but in the midst of her sorrow at parting from him she could not help sharing somewhat the pride of her husband in his brave little Ambrose, who seemed to have inherited all the courage and ambition of so many ancestors.

And now it will be needful for me to tell you something about this war, in which the French and the English also were at that time engaged. There was a dispute between two rivals for the throne of Austria; the English took the part of Maria Theresa, the daughter of the late Emperor Charles VI.; whilst the French were on the side of the Elector of Bavaria.

The war had been carried on for long years, and of late the French had been beaten many times; they had been driven from the river Danube to the river Maine, and the unfortunate Elector was waiting at Frankfort for the news of another defeat before giving up the struggle altogether.

George II., King of England, and his son, the Duke of Cumberland, were with the English army, and, this was the last campaign in which an English sovereign has fought in person.

The two armies of England and France were encamped on the opposite banks of the Maine when the Count and Ambrose de Boufflers joined the Maréchal de Noailles.

The boy, who had read of all the brave deeds he could meet with of soldiers of all times, begged of his father to allow him to begin at the very lowest rank, and so rise step by step in the regiment commanded by the Count de Boufflers.

He did not think it right that his birth should give him any advantage, and with something of Spartan courage he longed to show that a son of the house of Boufflers could endure the utmost hardships which a common soldier was exposed to. He therefore obtained permission to be in the ranks, and share the rations, sleep on the rough bed, and take part in the severe duty of the humblest recruit.

By thus living in the midst of them the noble boy became quite the idol of the soldiers, who would have done anything to save him hardships; but of these he always claimed his share, and even complained because he was not sent to posts of special danger or fatigue.

His father, who watched this extreme zeal with some anxiety, came to look after him one morning, when he had spent a wet night on the bare ground.

'Well, Ambrose!' he cried, with a smile; 'do you not think you would have been far more comfortable at home in your own bed? What say you, will you go back to Paris?'

'No, my father; I will not return without you. I never spent a happier night in my life, for I slept like a top, and dreamt that I was marshal of the camp.'

'My brave boy!' said his father, proudly. 'We shall make a soldier of you, I can see!'

What a contrast, indeed, this hard, rough life must have been to the child who had been so tenderly brought up in his luxurious home, and surrounded by everything that he could wish for!

It was not surprising that a lad whose whole heart was in his work should soon find means of distinguishing himself; and not long after he had joined the camp he was raised to the rank of ensign, amidst the hearty cheers of general satisfaction from the army.

'Ambrose de Boufflers,' said the Duke de Noailles—the commander of the troops—as he intrusted to the boy the flag of his father's regiment, 'you come of a noble race, and you have shown yourself worthy of your name. The whole regiment have claimed for you these silver epaulettes as your right, and I am proud to give them to you, and to confide the colours of France to your keeping.'

The boy modestly received all these honours, and replied with a flush of delight,—

'Sire, I will try to show myself worthy of them, and of your confidence!'

At these words shouts of applause rent the air, and the boy officer was received by his men with the utmost enthusiasm.

Hitherto, amidst all the hardships and dangers of the camp, there had been but little loss of life, for the French had been engaged in watching all the movements of the English army, and had almost succeeded in cutting off their supplies.

But these two armies could not remain so close to each other—being only divided by the river—without frequent skirmishes taking place.

(*Concluded in our next.*)

Ambrose the Soldier-boy.

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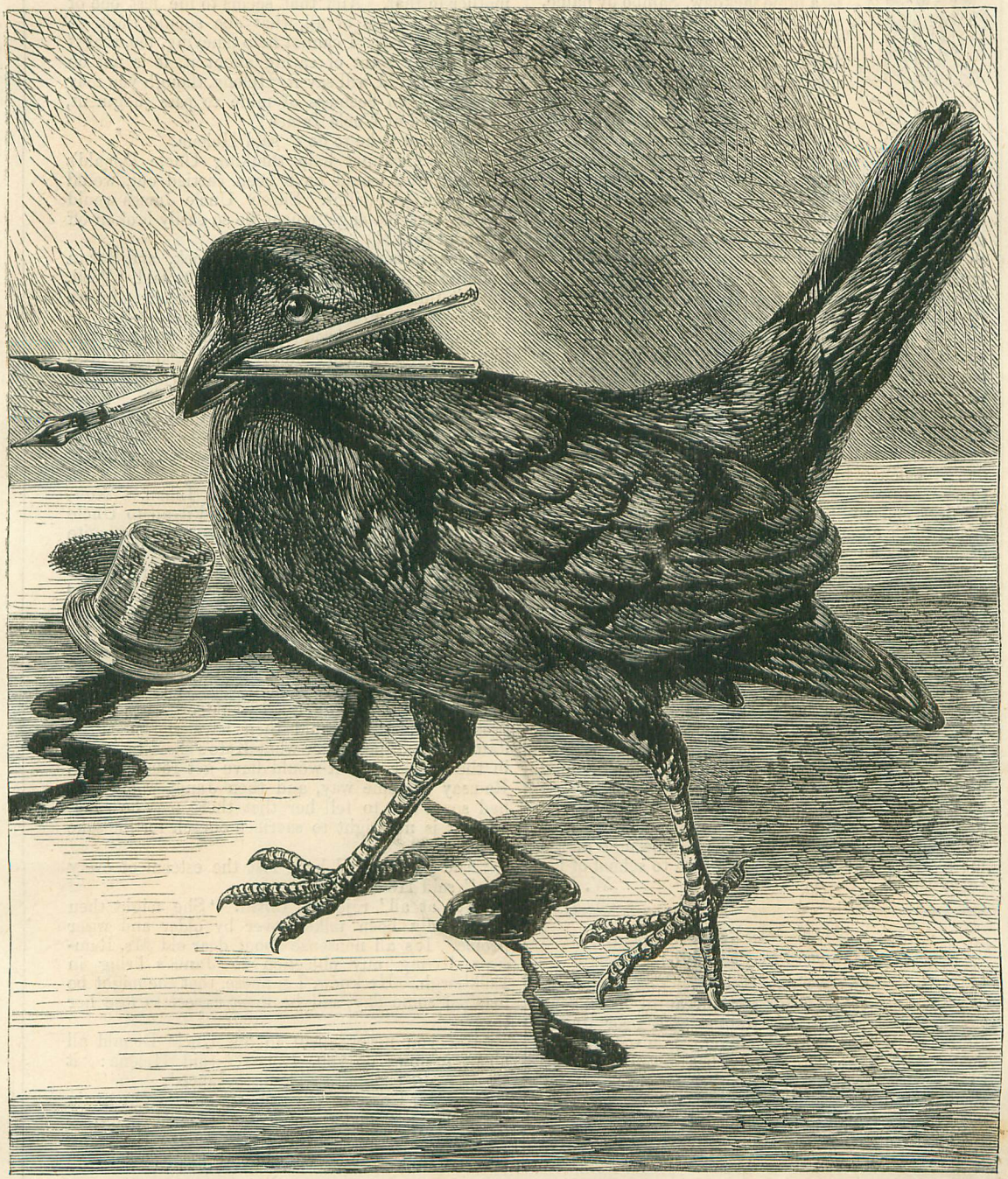

A Scholastic Jackdaw. By Harrison Weir.

A SCHOLASTIC JACKDAW.

—o—

MY chief favourite among my dumb companions has long been, and still is, a tame jackdaw, Sambo by name, who, by his waggish, winsome ways, and his many proofs of strong affection for me, has won his way to my heart. Sambo is also a great favourite with my pupils, from the youngest to the oldest. His private residence is a small wooden hut in a barn on the school premises. Here, however, he only spends his nights. Each morning his house-door is set open, and he at once comes out for his bath and breakfast. These over, he always makes his way to the schoolroom, and places himself upon the ledge under the master's chair of state, where he is permitted to abide during school hours. In his earlier experiences of school life he would now and then amuse himself during 'recess' by turning a few inkwells upside down, and emptying their contents over the desks; and he was several times found guilty of petty theft, sundry penholders, &c., having mysteriously disappeared from their proper places. By judicious discipline the erring Sambo was at last taught '*good manners*;' but even now he sometimes 'brings down the house' by calling aloud 'Adsum!' in response to the name of some absentee during the roll-call. At the dismissal of school Sambo quits his perch and struts forth among the boys. It is a common trick of his slyly to approach some boy who is quietly observing the sports of his comrades, and to give him a tremendous 'dig' in the calf of his leg, instantly retreating at his utmost speed. Even though overtaken and captured by his smarting victim, Sambo generally escapes from punishment; a rub of the poll, which he always enjoys, being the sign of forgiveness. To prove the bird's sagacity I may mention that, though set free on Sundays as on other days, he never attempts to make his way to the schoolroom, which is not occupied on that day. He never seems so thoroughly happy as when school duties are in full swing. During the vacations the poor fellow approaches the school door once every day at the usual time, gives it a melancholy peck or two, and then retreats to the barn, where he mopes most of his time away till the return to school of his '*dear* boys.' W. F.

THE SISTERS.

(*Continued from page* 267.)

THIS must be set right, Helena. You see how it has all come about, this dreadful misunderstanding between Uncle James and poor Janet Ramsay. We must do something. You see, granny does not know the truth. Janet has sacrificed herself to Kate. Kate worked upon her feelings till she thought it was right to give up her engagement sooner than consent to live in Edinburgh.'

'Lily! Lily! how can you say such things?' exclaimed Helena.

'Why, Helena, you are ready enough to pity Kate! Have you no pity for Janet? She must be suffering dreadfully!'

'Perhaps she does not care so much, after all!' said Helena.

'Helena! you surely don't agree with grandmother in that. And that seems to me just one of the worst things of all, that she should think so poorly of Janet. I cannot help fancying, too, that if there is any want of caring about it, it is not on Janet's side. I will say it, Helena, though you may think it is no business of mine to pass judgment, but it is odd of Uncle James!'

'But what is he to do?' said Helena.

'Well, I cannot help thinking Uncle Donald's plans, if they could have been carried out, would have been just right. Surely Uncle James would not have let the engagement be so easily broken off if he did care?'

Helena's face wore a puzzled look, and for a minute she did not answer. Then she said, 'Well, I don't think we can do anything, Lilian; and we shall only get ourselves into trouble, and——'

'Oh, Helena!' broke in Lilian; 'that is not like you. You don't surely mind about a little trouble we may get into if we can only help other people out of a great deal?'

'No,' answered her sister; 'I did not exactly say what I meant. We ought not to be meddling in other people's affairs, don't you see, Lily? It really isn't our affair.'

'But it is my affair,' persisted Lilian. 'Now, Helen, just tell me. When you told it all to Uncle Donald on that unlucky day, I suppose he quite understood all that Kate had to do with it?'

The colour rose on Helena's face, as she replied,—

'Of course I softened it off in telling him, as I did not think it was fair towards Kate to set Uncle Donald against her.'

'But don't you see, Helena, that all the mischief lies there, and no one here but you and I know this? If you had told Uncle Donald what you told me, I can't believe the engagement would ever have been broken off. He would then have shown Uncle James and grandmother what Kate's share had been in the matter, and it would have got round to Mr. Ramsay in some way, and then Janet would have had some one to tell her that there may be times when it is not right to sacrifice oneself for the sake of others.'

'And Kate would have lost the esteem of every one!' said Helena.

'Not at all,' rejoined Lilian. 'She might then have easily been talked over by older and wiser people. It's all nonsense about dear old Mr. Ramsay's having any objection to Janet's living in Edinburgh. He knew, I suppose, that she might be married some day, and he must expect to lose her then.'

'But you never mean to tell Uncle Donald all about it now; do you, Lilian?' said Helena: 'it would make such a terrible disturbance.'

'Helena, I must. It will never come right again if we do not make some effort. And I am so anxious; for, you see, it was my foolish chattering that was the first cause of all the wrong.' And Lilian

looked so imploringly at Helena, that it would have required a stronger will than that of her elder sister to resist her.

She began to think she must be wrong and her sister right in this matter, and though the thought of Kate made her waver a little, she said,—

'We will go together to Uncle Donald and see what he says.'

CHAPTER XI.—EXTRACTS FROM LILIAN'S JOURNAL.

Kirkton, August 20th.

We have got through the dreadful business of telling Uncle Donald the whole truth about Kate and Janet. I could not help feeling sorry that we were obliged to tell it to him, but there was no peace for me till it was done, and I hope it was not wrong to feel sorry. Uncle Donald said he should be glad not to worry grandmother, but he thought she must be told, and he has done it for us. Grandmother sent for us after she had heard it all, and before anything was said to us, Helena went up to granny in her sweet, winning way, saying, 'I am so sorry I kept back anything, but I thought of poor Kate——'

'And sacrificed poor Janet, it seems, according to Uncle Donald's ideas!' interrupted granny.

This quite destroyed every bit of composure Helena had left, and her tears began to fall again.

'Never mind, never mind,' said granny, hastily; 'perhaps I don't quite agree with Uncle Donald. I cannot understand a girl's throwing away her own happiness in such a way for the sake of a sister's whim. But you should certainly have told us, Helena, of all you saw and heard that day at Ivor Cottage. If it really is as your uncle supposes, you did no kindness to either your friend or Janet.'

Then Helena said, 'I don't know that she is my friend, grandmother. Only she seems to cling to me, and is always rather overlooked, or thinks herself so, and Mr. Ramsay cares most for Janet.'

'Helen, you may be quite sure that if Kate is in any way overlooked, it is through her own fault; and I suppose as to "care," Janet has always needed her father's care most. I think now, however, there is nothing further that either you or Lilian can do in this matter, and you had better keep out of any more meddling with it. But another time, when you have anything important to tell, remember it is better to tell all you really know about it, and not only the parts you like best.'

Grandmother I saw was more displeased than she liked to show, and poor Helena, so unused to be found fault with, seemed ready to sink into the earth. But I think just then a change came over granny. Whether she had been looking at Helena, and saw how much she was grieved, and felt sorry for her, or whether a sudden remembrance of Uncle Malcolm came into her mind, I cannot tell, but she said, 'Do not fret any more, children, we will see if anything can be done. I pray that it may not be that our dear, kind friend, Mr. Ramsay, has been a partial father,—has erred, as I erred.'

We said nothing, and grandmother went on:—

'Kate has an unpleasing disposition, but I had hoped since Janet's serious illness that she was trying to conquer it. If it is as you think now, Kate's old selfishness must have returned to her in full force, and done sad mischief. But we will leave this now. If you would like to come into the library this afternoon and sit with me, I will finish the account I was giving you of my own experience as a young mother.'

We thanked grandmother and left her, but I could not help wondering at her calmness when so much seemed to be at stake about Uncle James and Janet Ramsay. I can see that granny has a very strong will, and she looks upon Uncle Donald and Uncle James as boys still.

In the afternoon we went to the library with our work, and found granny finishing a letter. It looked like a very long one, and she did not speak to us till she had put it in the envelope and sealed it.

Then she gave it to me, saying, 'Put that in the letter-box in the hall, Lilian; I hope that your Uncle James may get it before he leaves Edinburgh.'

'Leaves Edinburgh, grandmother!' I said. 'Is he coming home, then, this week?'

'No,' granny answered; 'he is thinking of going abroad, to travel for a time. I have written to him to tell him, as I felt it my duty to tell him, all that your Uncle Donald has now told me, but I don't know whether it will make any difference to his arrangements.'

Much as I love grandmother, it made me feel quite angry to hear her talk in this way. I took the letter and put it in the box, and I said to it,—

'There, letter! go your way; and if you don't bring Uncle James home at once, I say he is not worthy to have such a wife as Janet Ramsay.'

I could hardly listen when granny began to take up Uncle Malcolm's history again where she left off, and when I first fixed my attention she was saying,—

'My amazement was great at the way in which my dear husband seemed to take Malcolm's behaviour. His one anxiety appeared to be to soothe and comfort me. I remember sitting in the library by his side that evening, broken down. He did not seem at all surprised at what had happened. "My dear love," I remember his saying; "don't so distress yourself. I have told Malcolm he must keep to his own room for the next four-and-twenty hours as a slight punishment, and I have desired Elspeth to give him nothing but bread and water. I thought you would prefer that to my giving him a caning, but my own judgment tells me, I fear, that the caning would have been the best."

'"But to think," I said, "of our boy, the heir to our name, the descendant of an ancient and honourable house, being so lost to a sense of honour!"

'"I don't think that is the worst of it," I remember he said, gently, "though it is very well to put that before the boy. We must not let him forget that his duty to God comes before his duty to his name, and that his failure there has been the grievous thing of all. However, he is very young, and I hope it will turn out that he is only a naughty boy, who needs stricter training than we can give him at home. He must go to school at once."

'I was afraid this was coming; and oh, how I rebelled against it! I used arguments, entreaties, and persuasions to get my husband to relent. But

he was firm, though I could see that it was heart-breaking work to him to resist me.

'Well, to school he went. We sent him to Eton; I would not hear of his going anywhere else. I was so determined that if he went to school it should be there. Walter agreed to Eton at last, but he told me it would have been better for him to have gone for a year or two first to some smaller school, and learnt to work his way carefully up in that. But I would listen to nothing but Eton, and I am sure now that my real reason was that Malcolm would like going there, and be rather proud of it; whereas, if sent to a smaller school, he would regard it as a punishment. I was still feeding his pride, after all the warning I had had! Even my old Elspeth had clearer eyesight than I. A few words that fell from her the night before Malcolm left home made me uncomfortable, and haunted me for days.

(*To be continued.*)

WONDERS OF NATURE.

MONT BLANC.

THE word Alp, or Alb, probably means 'white,' as Albion means 'the land of white cliffs.' The Alps are a chain of lofty mountains, which separate Italy from Germany, France, and Switzerland. They stretch, like a crescent, from the Gulf of Genoa to the head of the Adriatic Sea, and the whole length of the chain is about 600 miles.

The mountain called Mont Blanc is the king of the Alps. He is 15,732 English feet in height. In mere height, however, he is run hard by several other snowy peaks—Monte Rosa being 15,150, Mont Cervin 14,835, and the Ortler Spitz 14,400 feet high.

These huge Alpine masses lie midway between the North Pole and the Equator, and are from 50 to 100 miles in breadth. The top of many of these gigantic peaks is covered with perpetual snow and masses of ice. The hottest summer sun never melts the snow, which lies above 9500 feet or thereabouts. Above that line, how grand, how solemn, are the scenes! High pyramids, robed in everlasting whiteness; vast seas of ice, with cracks in them, revealing unfathomable depths; glaciers of a green colour, slowly moving on and on, with irresistible power, down the sides of the mountain; and every now and then the avalanche, that 'thunderbolt of snow,' breaking with the noise of thunder upon the rocks, and looking like a cataract, awful and beautiful!

Some people suppose that such huge mountains must affect the roundness of the earth's surface, but this is a mistake. On comparing the highest peaks with the bulk of the globe, they sink into insignificance, being, in comparison with it, as a grain of sand to a globe of a foot in diameter, or as the little roughness of an orange-rind to the orange itself.

The line of perpetual snow alters in different climates, being, of course, lowest in the arctic regions and highest at the equator. A mountain at the equator must be over 15,744 feet, or perpetual snow will not lie upon it. In Norway the line of eternal snow is as low as 4480 feet: the snow never disappears above that line, even in July. How different to the city of Mexico! Built at an elevation of 7472 feet, it is yet a place where pine-apples and oranges ripen in the open air.

Vast and awful as Mont Blanc looks, it is not very difficult to climb. It was, however, never scaled, we believe, before 1716, when Dr. Paccard and James Balma ascended it. Every year now adventurous travellers stand upon its summit. The cold—always below freezing-point—and the difficulty of breathing, the quickened pulse, the thirst, and the sense of exhaustion, are drawbacks to the triumph; but it is 'a thing of beauty and a joy for ever' to have stood once with all Europe under your feet. The ascent has been often described. There are, of course, perils to be encountered in the way, and several lives have been lost in these conflicts between man and the mountain whose domain he has invaded. When Longfellow describes the aspiring youth who grasped a banner emblazoned with 'Excelsior!' and passed through the Alpine village, and by the light of household fires, toward the region of spectral glacier, snow, and ice, the old man's warning voice said, 'Try not the pass;' 'dark lowers the tempest;' 'the roaring torrent is deep and wide;' and the peasant had his advice also,—

> 'Beware the pine-tree's withered branch;
> Beware the awful avalanche!'

This, the most terrible of Alpine dangers and phenomena, the avalanche, has been well described in Murray's *Handbook*, and our readers will thank us for making a few extracts.

'Our attention is first arrested by a distant roar, and in half a minute a gush of white powder is seen coming out of one of the upper grooves or gullies. It then sinks into a fissure and is lost to sight, reappearing soon after at a lower stage some hundred feet below. By watching the sloping white side of the mountain, the separation of the fragments of ice from the mass of the glacier may be seen at the moment when disengaged, and before the sound reaches the ear. In passing through the different gullies, it is ground to powder so fine that, as it issues from the lowest, it looks like a handful of meal, and particles, reduced to dust, rise in a cloud of vapour. You must bear in mind, that, at each discharge, whole tons of ice are hurled down the mountain, and that the white dust is made up of blocks capable of sweeping away whole forests, and of overwhelming houses and villages.

'Avalanches of a more dangerous character fall, with some regularity, down channels made quite smooth by friction. These regular avalanches are eagerly looked for by the people, as sure tokens of the coming spring. Sometimes, however, these avalanches forsake the old paths, and overwhelm a village in a night. To guard against such destruction, large and massive dykes of masonry are built, with an angle pointing upwards, to turn aside the snow. The forests are most carefully preserved, and

Mont Blanc.

accounted as sacred groves; for, of course, they offer a protection to the districts below them. Yet sometimes whole forests are laid low by the avalanche. The tallest stems are snapped like a bit of wax, and the barkless and branchless stumps remain for years, like a stubble-field, to tell of what has happened. The most desolating sort of avalanche of all is, however, "the drift avalanche." This comes in winter after a heavy snowfall, when violent gales of wind, such as prevail only in mountainous districts, hurl immense volumes of snow into the valleys beneath. The rush of air which accompanies them is much dreaded. It has all the effects of a blast of gunpowder. It is like that described in the Bible, which rent the rocks in pieces.

'When seen from the north or south, Mont Blanc looks like a pyramid, surrounded by a number of sharp peaks, called aiguilles, or needles. Seen from the valley of Chamouny, it has the appearance of a dromedary, and the people in that charming spot call it, Bosse de Dromadaire."' G. S. O.

AMBROSE THE SOLDIER-BOY.

(*Concluded from page* 271.)

DURING one of these engagements, the very day after little Ambrose had been made an ensign, he narrowly escaped with his life.

He received orders to escort a detachment of one hundred and twenty horse on a foraging expedition, to search the country around for food. It was early on a bright spring morning when they started, and the young officer was full of boyish delight at being thus placed in command for the first time. They met with more success than they expected, and were coming back laden with provisions, when they were suddenly surprised and surrounded by a party of Hanoverian soldiers.

At first the boy was startled and confused, and seems to have fallen from his horse, but he soon recovered his presence of mind, remounted, and made a most gallant defence at the head of his little band.

He was the most exposed, from the fact of his carrying the flag of the regiment; and in defending it the brave boy received a sabre-cut in his right hand, while his hat was pierced with balls. However, not a man was lost on the French side, and when Ambrose and his men returned to the camp they were received with the warmest praise.

There is a very touching letter preserved which the little fellow wrote directly after the engagement, with his left hand, to his mother, to assure her of his safety.

I would give you a translation of this beautiful letter, but that the tender boyish expressions lose so much of their simple eloquence by being changed into another language.

He begins by begging his dear mother not to feel anxious at the sight of his trembling, uneven writing, for it is only that he has not got used to writing with his left hand yet. Then he tells her the story of the encounter simply and modestly, dwelling on his joy at being able to protect his flag, the '*beau drapeau*,' which had only been in his care so short a time.

He tells of the devotion of his servant Francis, who had risked his life many times that day to save his young master.

And little Ambrose ends by telling of his father's joy on seeing him return safely; and he prays God that he may live to see his dearest mother again when the war is over.

Alas! this hope was never to be realised on earth!

Time passed on; three long, tedious months, in which the two armies waited anxiously for some decisive battle. With great exertions and skill, the Duke de Noailles had been able to shut up the English army on the other side of the river Maine so entirely, that they were almost reduced by famine.

But the French army of sixty thousand men also suffered greatly, and the boy-officer took his share of every hardship and privation. He obeyed his orders, whatever they might be, with ready courage—whether he was sent on some dangerous expedition to reconnoitre the enemy's posts, at the risk of discovery and death; or whether he was placed on the night-watch to guard the camp from surprise—the cheerful obedience and endurance of this noble little soldier was a bright example to all.

No wonder that he was loved and almost idolised by the soldiers, for whom he had always a sunny smile and a kind word.

As I told you, King George II. and his army found themselves in a position of great danger and difficulty, for soon, their only means of supply being stopped by the French, they found it necessary to change their quarters.

King George, therefore, gave orders to break up the camp and commence a retreat, but when he advanced near the village of Ettingen he saw that a part of the French army had crossed the river and stood in front of him to stop his further advance.

At this moment the English army found itself enclosed in a narrow plain, bounded on the right by undulating hills and thick woods, and on the left by the river, on the opposite bank of which the Duke de Noailles had placed batteries. It was a difficult matter to decide what could be done, for to retreat would have been as dangerous as to advance, the enemy's cannon having begun to sweep across the river.

But it was found that a narrow pass, with a deep morass in the middle of it, lay between the English and the opposing French army, and this it was which restored confidence to the King.

He gave orders to answer the enemy's cannon, and the English army were formed in the best position to defend this pass.

The Duke de Noailles, who seems to have been an excellent general, had laid his plans with so much prudence and skill, that there was every prospect of victory for the French.

But after the fires of the two armies had crossed for hours with scarcely a break, and whole lines of soldiers had been swept away—just at the most critical moment of the day, so the French historians tell us—some commanding officer misunderstood his orders, and suffered his men to rush impetuously down the narrow defile which separated the two armies. Here they were driven back by the English with so much firmness and valour, that after a short but very fierce conflict the French were obliged to retreat across the river, and the day was lost to them.

On the morning of this terrible battle the Count de Boufflers, whose duty called him to a different outpost from the situation to which his son was ordered, had taken a most solemn and affecting leave of Ambrose.

'The chances of war are uncertain, my boy; we may never meet again: but of this I feel confident, you will do your duty. If I fall, and you survive, comfort your mother!'

The boy was full of youthful hope; he only thought of victory, and with a light heart he began his march to the place where he was to be stationed. The father and son parted, and met no more on that eventful day, of which the long hours wore slowly away, while thousands of brave men fell on the river-side.

Ambrose de Boufflers was placed at a post which suddenly became the scene of a fierce struggle. One by one, almost all his men had fallen dead at his side, but still the noble boy remained firm and faithful at his post, obedient to the command he had received, until at length a half-spent cannon-ball struck his leg. With a cry of pain the boy fell to the ground, murmured his mother's name, and became insensible.

Hours passed away and no help came, for the battle was lost, and the French had been compelled to fall back from the ground which they had lately fought on. The evening was fast coming on, when a soldier, in search of one of his missing comrades, came upon the heap of slain, in the midst of which the gallant boy was stretched, with his dead horse at his side.

The man at once recognised the young Ambrose de Boufflers, who was so well known throughout all the army, and at first thought he was dead.

But finding that the boy was still alive he took him up in his arms, and with much danger and difficulty carried him back to the camp, where the wounded were protected by a white flag.

We can imagine the bitter grief of the father when he saw his darling son brought home to him pale as death, and with a fearful wound. A surgeon was quickly summoned, and having examined the injury he shook his head, and whispered something to the Count. Ambrose—who had recovered consciousness with the sharp pain caused by his wound being probed—noticed that his father started and turned pale.

'What is it?' he asked. 'Tell me all, for I can bear the worst.'

The surgeon looked at the father for permission to speak.

'Yes, tell him; he must know it at once,' said the Count; and as he spoke, the strong man burst into tears.

'My young hero,' said the surgeon, kindly, 'the wound is a serious one, and I fear that instant amputation is the only chance.' His voice trembled with emotion, and he could scarcely speak the terrible sentence; for, accustomed as he had been to scenes of pain and death, the army doctor had never before attended so young a patient on the field of battle.

For one moment the boy was silent, and his father watched him in anxious suspense, fearing that in that terrible instant the courage, which he had so often shown in the midst of tumult and excitement, had failed him on the quiet bed of sickness.

Not so. It was not fear of suffering which caused that moment's pause.

'Shall I get well if you cut off my leg, or may it cause me to die?' asked Ambrose, in a low tone, as he looked up calmly and earnestly at the surgeon.

There was no spoken answer, but the surgeon's sad face and gesture had told the boy all that he wished to know.

'Then please to let it wait for half-an-hour, as I must write once more to my mother.'

His request was granted; as, indeed, how could it have been refused? They gave him paper and pencil, and with a hand trembling with the agony which shook his whole frame the loving son wrote thus:—

'MOTHER DEAR,—I have had a wound in my leg. I will not hide the truth from you; they tell me I must lose it. It makes me very sad for your sake, as I know how you will grieve for your little Ambrose. I hope that I may survive it, but God's will be done! I kiss you with all my heart!'

He finished with great difficulty, for he had to be supported all the time, and more than once he nearly fainted with the pain, which the slightest movement caused. Then, turning to the surgeon, he said,—

'I am ready. Forgive me for keeping you waiting.'

He bore the operation with scarcely a sigh or a groan, and when his father, who held his hand all the time, said to him, with tears,—

'A little more—it will soon be over; have courage, my son!'

'I have more courage than you have, dear father,' said the brave boy. 'Do not weep for me!'

At length, all was over, and the child was laid back on his pillows. For a short time he seemed to bear up, and hope was strong in the hearts of those who watched round his bedside. But suddenly the colour faded from his cheek; he turned pale, and gasped for breath.

The shock had been too great for his tender frame, and in another minute, without a word or a struggle, Ambrose de Boufflers had ceased to live.

M. A.

Ambrose lying amongst the slain.

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Chatterbox.

An Intelligent Dog. By Harrison Weir.

AN INTELLIGENT DOG.

WE hear, such wonderful instances of the intelligence of dogs, that we can scarcely wonder at any fresh proof of their sagacity; but the following anecdote would appear almost too good to be true:—

A certain Monsieur N——, going on foot from Leuze to Lessines, in Belgium, took with him his dog, which he was anxious to get rid of; but as he was unwilling either to drown him, to hang him, or to shoot him, he resolved to lose him on the way. The dog, who instead of kind words and caresses received nothing but threats, seemed to understand his master's project; he kept quite close to his heels, and would not leave him for a moment. N——, obliged to sleep out for that night in order to finish his business, went to the inn, and said to his four-footed companion, instead of good-night,—

'To-morrow, you rascal, I shall take the train, and you will have to walk about here.'

He then went up to his room and went to bed.

The next morning, great was N——'s surprise to perceive, when he got up, that one of his socks and his waistcoat were missing. The landlord, when questioned, maintained that no one could have taken these articles, as no other stranger had been lodged in the inn; they were all searching and wondering when they found, in a corner of the house, the dog, who had been so threatened the evening before, lying upon the stocking and the waistcoat of his master. The poor animal seemed to have wished in this way to prevent his master from starting without him. N——, admiring the sagacity of his dog, no longer tried to get rid of him. J. F. C.

THE SISTERS.

(*Continued from page 276.*)

OLD Elspeth, as usual, came to my room the last thing to see if I was comfortable, and to tell me how the children were all sleeping, and she said, "And the young master leaves us to-morrow? I wish it was not to this grand English school, though. We all have our stumbling-blocks, my lady, and his is pride. And he is greatly set up with this."

"Oh, nonsense, Elspeth!" I said; "he would not be so ridiculous!" But I knew in my heart that she was right. I comforted myself a little by thinking that what I had so often heard must be true, and that he would, as they say, find his level amongst such a number of boys, and his pride would be taken down a little. But I knew my husband feared that he would shirk his lessons, and not try to get on, and so be overlooked among the number. I thought that was not at all likely, but that his pride would help him there and make him work. Still, my heart misgave me when I felt that both my husband and Elspeth doubted the wisdom of this step.

'Time passed on. There was no deceiving myself into a belief that Malcolm was doing well at school. The reports we had sent us were always indifferent—very little progress in studies at all. And by-and-by came unfavourable accounts of conduct; and at last a letter to my husband from the master in whose house Malcolm was placed, speaking in rather strong terms of his disobedience and untrustworthiness, and begging my husband to warn the boy thoroughly well when he came home for the ensuing holidays, as he was very much afraid that some severe punishment, or even expulsion from Eton, might follow upon a repetition of his conduct.

'When Malcolm came home (he was now fifteen years old) I do not know what my husband said to him, I only know that the boy was very sullen and silent in his father's presence, and not so much inclined to talk to me as he used to be. Before he returned to Eton, however, I had a conversation with him, and a most unsatisfactory one. On my expressing my disappointment at his very slow progress in his studies, he told me he did not look upon mere head-learning as of very much consequence to a man in his position. I could have laughed if I had not been so miserable, as I told him that I was afraid he would find it, on the contrary, a matter of the very gravest consequence.

'"But," he replied, tossing back his handsome, wilful young head, "I shall not have to work for my living. This"—and he looked out of the window by which we were standing and waved his hand across the park—"will be mine at my father's death."

'Oh, how my heart stood still when I heard these words! For one instant a cold feeling came over me as I thought of my dear husband's delicate health. Ah! I did not know how delicate or how failing. And of my younger children—I did think of them then—left to the tender mercies of such a boy as this. How was the property left? And then I remembered; and such a sudden feeling of joy came into my heart as I did remember what I had heard about the estate. I had never troubled my head about it. I was so happy in the present with my dear, kind husband, that I could not have borne to look forward to what might happen in the event of his death; but now,—and I turned to my eldest son, and in as steady a voice as I could command said, "Should such a heavy calamity fall on me, your brothers, and little sister, as the death of your dear father, I think you will find that your being the heir to this estate is by no means so sure. The property is not entailed. It is wholly and entirely your father's, to leave as he wills. Upright and honourable as your father is, he will care nothing about making his eldest son his heir if the conduct of that son proves that he will be an unworthy successor to him."

'"Mother!" the boy cried, "what do you know? You know that he has left the property away from me. And you speak so coldly to me, as if our father's death would be only a calamity to you and the children. Don't you suppose I care for him?"

'"No, I fear you do not, Malcolm," I said. "At any rate, one must judge so from your behaviour. You never try to please him, and you coolly speak of coming into your inheritance at his death as if he was no more to you than the merest stranger you may chance to meet in the street."

'"Mother, he is so cold to me."

'"That is untrue, Malcolm; he is the same in his conduct to you as he is to the others, who have never grieved and wounded him so sorely. Perhaps some day it will please God to open your eyes, and you will see against what a good and kind father you have been sinning."

'"Mother, you take such a serious view of everything. I'm just the same as other boys."

'"You, perhaps, are the same as the boys with whom you choose to associate," I said, bitterly enough, for I was sure he had put in his lot at school with a bad set.

'"I think it's a horrid shame that the property does not come to the eldest son, as all great estates should," was the next remark from Malcolm. "Has my father——"

'"I know nothing about what your father has done," I interrupted; "and I will say nothing further to you on the subject."

'Before he left home that time I remember Malcolm came to me and expressed his sorrow, and said he would try to be more what we wished. It was the first time I had seen him as a big boy humbled and contrite, and I hoped great things from it.

'Time passed on. I was hoping much from Malcolm's own letters that he was trying to do better, when a severe shock came. My husband received a letter from Eton from the master who had before written to him, advising him to come and remove Malcolm himself. He wrote very kindly, and said he was anxious to save us from the disgrace of his being expelled, which he saw would be the end of it, unless he was taken away; and he told my husband that if he would come up he would give him the best advice he could about the boy, who had been to him, he said, the object of much anxious thought. Nothing my husband could say calmed me. I wanted him to let me go with him. I remember that I even allowed myself to say that I was sure no mercy would be shown to him unless I went. I shall never forget the pained look on my husband's face as these words passed my lips. He only said, "My poor Alison! cannot you trust my own son, my first-born, to me?"

'I felt sorry then, and said, "Oh, pardon me, Walter, I am so unhappy!"

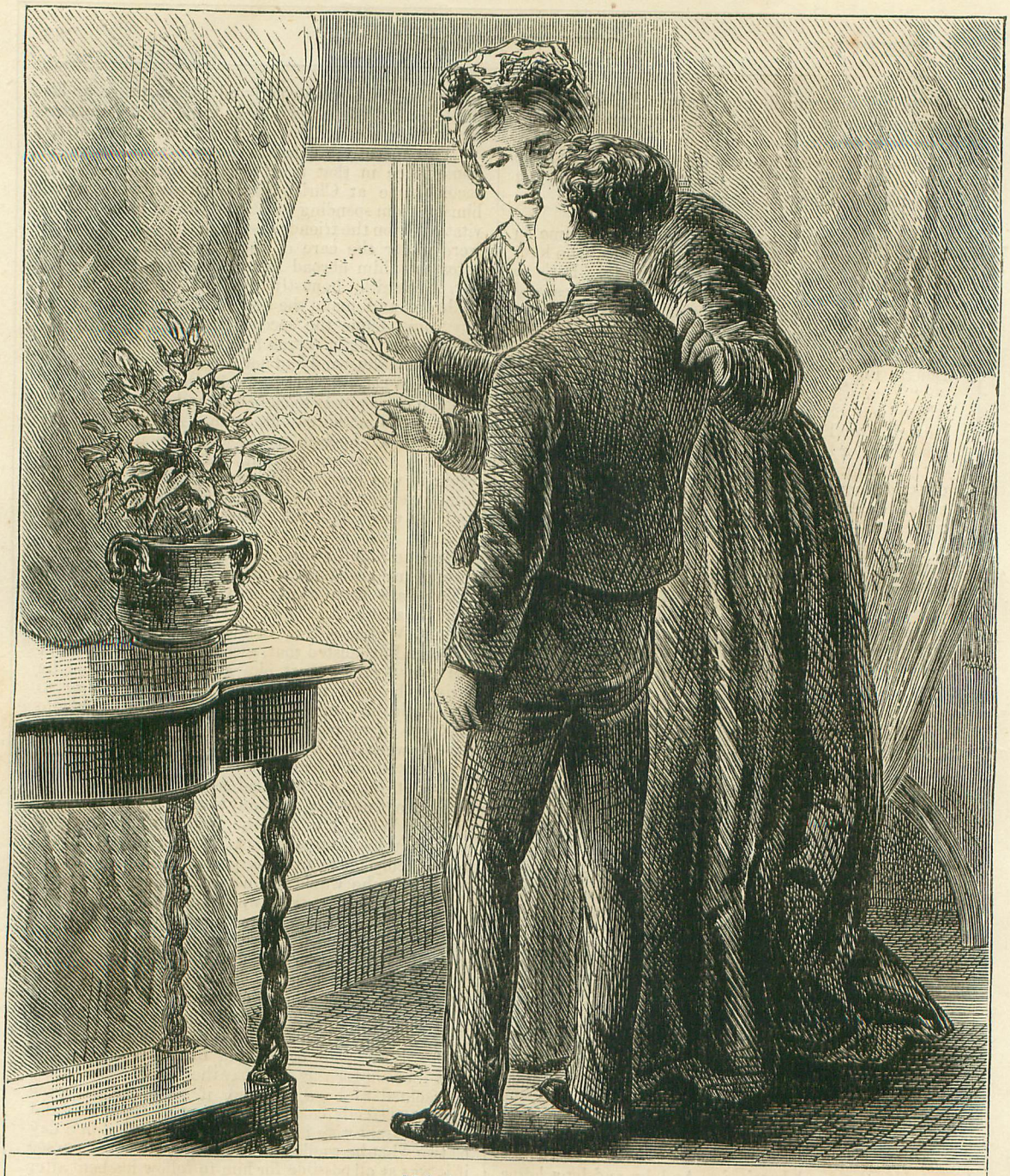
'"Trust me," he answered, "and we may find there is something yet to be done that will not be so very painful."

'He went, and I waited. And by-and-by a letter came. And the letter, though written most tenderly, showed me that my boy had been even worse than I thought. Such untruthfulness and insolence to those in authority! Walter was not going to bring him home, but to place him at once with a private tutor in the south of England.

'"If this fails," my husband ended by saying, "I am afraid, my poor Alison, he must go to sea. I should have sent him to sea at once in preference to the tutor, and I was strongly advised to do so by his master, but I could not bear to think of the distress to my poor wife, and decided to give this a trial first."

'Two more years passed away. Malcolm came home twice in that time, once in the summer, the second time at Christmas; otherwise he excused himself from spending vacations with us, as he had invitations from the friends of some of the young lads who were under the care of the same tutor. Once his tutor took him abroad for some weeks. I think he, Mr. Galbraith, honestly tried to do his duty by Malcolm, and make the best of him; but when the boy came home the second time he wrote to my husband, saying he feared his efforts had been in vain.

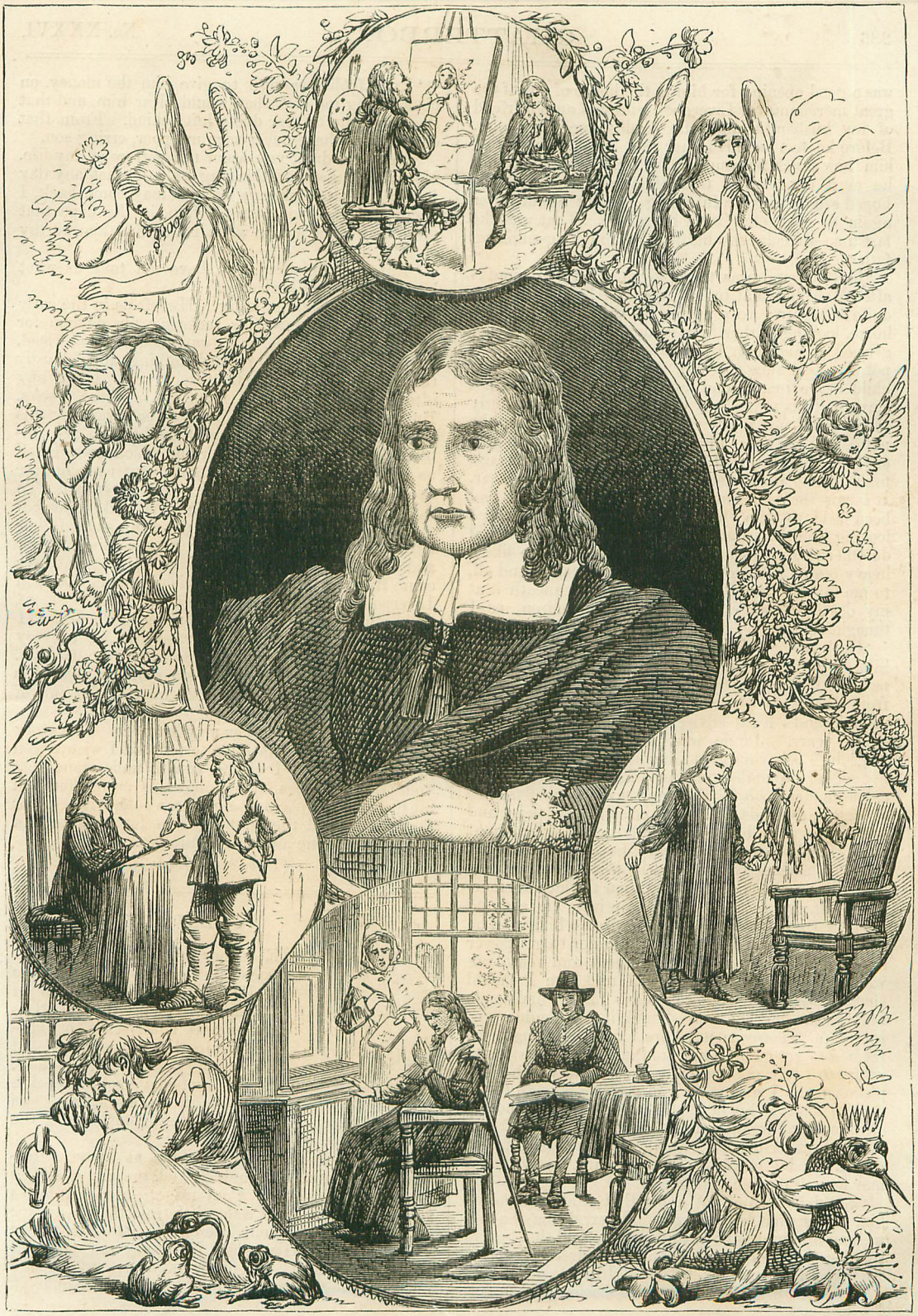
'My dear husband had not been at all well, and that Christmas Day was but a sad day to us; but we tried to keep our sadness to ourselves, and at first my dear husband said nothing to Malcolm. After New-year's Day he had a long interview with him in the study, at which I was not present. Malcolm came to me when it was over, and began something about his father treating him shamefully, and speaking to him as if he was a boy still. But my heart was too full to listen with any patience. My eyes were fully opened now, and I was painfully aware of the critical state of my husband's health. I remembered I said, "You have been agitating your father! you have much to answer for!" and hurried to the study where I found Walter sitting in his arm-chair, looking so white and exhausted that, without speaking a word, I ran away again to get him some wine. When he revived he told me that he had been trying to free Malcolm's mind of the idea that getting into debt was of no consequence, and that he would not have to work for his living. He said, "I have told him, that though he certainly would have inherited this estate at my death, had he but promised fairly, I could not now say with any certainty that it would be his. What I did in the matter would entirely depend on his future conduct. But, anyhow, I should undoubtedly make an ample provision for my younger children, so he would not have anything like the income I have at present with which to keep up the estate; and therefore it was most necessary that he should choose, and not only choose but steadily work in some profession, or business, if he felt himself unfitted for any profession. I repeated to him what I have always said, that every one of my boys should be taught to work, and brought up to work, whatever their prospects might be. I ended with what I think offended the poor boy's pride more than anything, that I would for this once pay the 'very foolish' debts he seemed to have incurred, if he would write me down a perfectly correct statement of them all; and that I should wish him to make up his mind in a day or two what he would like to do, and I would then see if it was at all possible for him to follow his bent after the profitless way in which he had passed his school-boy years. On this he said, 'But am not I to go to Oxford?' I told him, 'Certainly not; that I could not be so mad as to send a boy there who had failed under both his tutors, and had been nearly expelled from Eton.' I think that subdued him a little. He left the room looking more crestfallen than I have seen him for a great while. I hope the mortification he felt may do him good."



Malcolm and his Mother.

'And now, my children, to draw a long story to a close, Malcolm came to his father in a few days, saying that a merchant's office was what he thought he should like, and he had a fancy for Liverpool. He thought he should "see something more of life there," he said, and he might get a chance then of going voyages and being sent abroad. We felt much surprised at this, and his father asked him if he would like the sea as a profession. To this he said No, but that he was heartily sick of school and tutors, and as he could write a fair hand, and knew something of French and German, he thought he should like an office. We could not understand him, but we agreed to give it a trial. His father said to him, "A lazy fellow has no chance at all in the life you have chosen. You will have a great deal to learn, Malcolm, and probably a great deal to put up with."

'The boy soon entered upon his new career. There



John Milton.

was a good opening for him in the house of one of the great merchants in Liverpool, who was an old friend of my husband's, and who readily took Malcolm. Before he left us his father paid his debts and told him how much he would allow him yearly, but that he must not exceed that allowance, and that he hoped such a disgraceful thing as debt would never again be connected with his name. That was the last time Malcolm saw his dear, patient, long-suffering father.

'My husband was taken from me three months after Malcolm went to Liverpool. He died one day quite suddenly; we sent for Malcolm, and he came home, looking rather awe-struck and subdued, not grieved, in my heart I felt sure; and what agony did not that assurance cost me, that our eldest son, the child of so many fond hopes and wishes, was not sorry that his father was dead! I felt it so bitterly that I could not make up my mind to give him the notice and attention I had been accustomed to bestow on him, and for that I afterwards blamed myself much, as he had a terrible disappointment to bear. It seems that he had, notwithstanding all that had been said to him, built greatly upon his father's leaving him this estate. He never believed he would do otherwise, and so the will came upon him like a heavy blow. It simply left everything, estate and all, to me for my lifetime, with power to bequeath it at my death to my children or grandchildren, as I thought right.

'On hearing this will read, Malcolm so far forgot himself as to vent his feelings in a violent burst of passion, calling down upon himself a stern rebuke from the lawyer who was present; who, besides being my husband's legal adviser, had been his friend for many years. Jamie was lost in amazement at Malcolm's behaviour, but Donald understood—ah! to my sorrow he understood! And as I watched the colour mount in his fair face, and saw his eyes flash fire at Malcolm's words, I felt that the chances of peace and love between the brothers were but small. I thought that Malcolm would at least have respected my grief in those early days of widowhood, but nothing was further from my poor boy than the idea of showing me any respect or love. In private he accused me of having persuaded his father to do him what he called this "terrible injustice," in order to get power into my own hands. All argument and reasoning were thrown away upon him. I told him I should continue the same allowance his father had made him for the present, and should, if his conduct was satisfactory, increase it before long. At length he seemed to get quieter, and told me he was anxious to return to Liverpool as soon as possible, at which I was pleased; and I remember being foolish enough to say to him that if he needed money I should not at all mind making him a present before he left. He laughed rather bitterly, saying, "There is no chance of your giving me what I really want, mother, so I may as well decline your offer."

'I told him I did not know that at all, and asked him to say what he did want. To my dismay he told me one hundred pounds, and then he said that he had some further debts which he had not dared to mention to his father; and "now," he added, "this will has put it out of my power to hope to discharge them."

'I was foolish enough to give him the money, on his assuring me that that would clear him, and that there were no further debts left behind. From that day to this I have never seen my poor, erring son.

'Now, children, you know the sorrow of my life. You also know that, thinking as I do that any day I may hear of him, any day he may come back, I keep the estate in trust for him, in the hope that there may come a time when I may find him worthy of it.'

'But, grandmother, you have not told us what became of Uncle Malcolm?'

'My child, I do not know. He left us in the early morning of the day after receiving my cheque for one hundred pounds, as we supposed, for Liverpool. A week elapsed, but we heard nothing, and I hardly thought it strange, as he rarely wrote home any oftener than once in a fortnight or three weeks. But a month passed. I had written myself by this time, saying, I should have thought that, remembering the sadness and mourning which surrounded us all at Kirkton, he would have sent us a line or two telling us of his safe arrival in Liverpool. To this there was not a word in answer, and I was beginning to fear that, thinking the death of his father left him more his own master, he was going further and further on the downward path, when a letter came from my husband's old friend, the merchant in Liverpool, who had Malcolm in his house of business, telling us that Malcolm had never gone back. I immediately started for Liverpool, taking my boy Donald with me; but all our inquiries were fruitless. I only found, alas! that the story of his debts was altogether false, for that he had none at the time of his father's death.

'And now, children, you may leave me. This story has been very painful to me to tell, but I wished you to know it. And I wished you to understand that your Uncle James must follow his profession, and must live in the place where he can follow it best, for that I only hold the estate in trust for my sons, and this long-lost one among the number.'

(*To be continued.*)

JOHN MILTON.

THE author of one of the grandest poems in the English language—*Paradise Lost*—was born in London, December 6, 1608. His father was a scrivener, or law-writer, in large practice: and his mother a lady from Wales. His father had a good knowledge of books, loved music, and was one of the best composers of the age.

John Milton's education began at home; afterwards he went to St. Paul's School, and in due course to the University at Cambridge. He got on so rapidly with his studies that it is said he was a 'ripe scholar and a good one' before he was twenty-one years of age. His talent for poetry showed itself very early—'at the age of ten,' says one writer; and his fond father was so proud of him that he employed

Jansen to paint his portrait—a half-length in laced ruffles. From the time of his leaving Cambridge, John Milton resided with his father on an estate which the latter had purchased at Horton, in the county of Bucks. In 1637, on the death of his mother, he got permission to visit Italy, on a musical as well as poetical tour, to collect for his father the works of the great masters of one art, while he gained personal experience in the other by intercourse with learned persons there. 'I had determined,' says he, 'to lay up, as the best treasure and solace of good old age, if God vouchsafe it to me, the honest liberty of free speech.'

The next long stage in Milton's life was his being secretary to Oliver Cromwell, for which he had a very moderate salary.

In 1643 he married Mary, daughter of Richard Powell, Esq., of Forest Hill, in Oxfordshire. On her death he became blind, and he married for the second time Catherine, the daughter of Captain Woodcock, of Hackney.

After the death of Cromwell, and the Restoration of Charles II., Milton was a marked man. But he was now poor and blind, and no one could pursue with violence an enemy cast down by fortune and disarmed by nature.

Milton now turned the whole force of his early poetic genius to the working out the dream of his boyhood, the writing of a grand poem.

Thus, till his sixtieth year, so little impatient was he of securing fame by that very gift on which he most valued himself, that the whole of his published poems scarcely made a hundred pages of print.

Now he felt—poor blind man!—that it was within him, so his daughter wrote while he composed.

Paradise Lost was published in 1667: *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*, a Tragedy, three years afterwards. These, with *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Lycidas*, *Comus*, the *Sonnets*, with a few juvenile poems in Latin, Italian, and English, completed his poetical works.

Hence it appears that he devoted only his youth and his old age to himself and his fame: his middle life he gave to his country.

He died peacefully, in 1674, at his house in Bunhill Fields; and was buried next to his father, in the chancel of St. Giles', at Cripplegate.

One moral which young readers may draw for themselves from John Milton's life is—that youth is the time for book-learning and industry; and then, whatever may be the troubles or reverses of after-life, or old age, a mind well-stored in early days can give consolation and cheerfulness, as the poet found, even when he was aged, poor, and blind.

A CHILD'S WORK.

'WOULD that I had work to do,
And such pleasant work as you!'
Quoth the maiden to the bee.
'In and out among the heather,
All the golden summer weather;
It is easy labour, truly!'
Quoth the maiden to the bee.

'It is pleasant to the seeming
Of a wee maid, idly dreaming,
Every flower to visit duly.'
Quoth the bee.
'But the sweetest rose is but a dusty workshop unto me!
Work away with strong endeavour—
Leave your play,
Work away.
Summer will not last for ever!'
Quoth the bee.

'Teach me what to undertake,
Sweets from flowers I cannot make.'
Quoth the maiden to the bee.
'What great work shall I be doing?
What contriving, what pursuing?
I will idle be no longer!'
Quoth the maiden to the bee.
'But she only heard him droning,
And the song he was intoning,
Growing faint or growing stronger,'
And its burden seemed to be—
'Though the sweetest rose is but a workshop unto me,
I must toil with strong endeavour;
Work away,
All the day,
Summer does not last for ever!'
Quoth the bee.

'Then she heard the sweetest singing
Of a lark above her, winging
Up the blue sky o'er the lea;
Pretty lark, the sun pursuing,
What great work shall I be doing?
For this idleness is folly!'
Quoth the maiden on the lea.
'Sing, be gay, enjoy the weather,
Like the wee lark o'er the heather;
Sing, and chase dull melancholy
From thy dear ones—copy me.
By a silver thread of music to my nest upon the lea
I am tethered; so endeavour
To be gay,
While you may,
Summer does not last for ever!'
Quoth the lark above the lea.

'But I cannot always sing,
I would do some greater thing!'
Quoth the maiden on the lea.
'Then the blue-bells 'mong the heather
Bent their little heads together—
How they whisper to each other!'
Thought the maiden on the lea.
And they answered, bowing lowly,
'To be sweet, and pure, and holy
Is our way; there's not another
Half so lovely, all agree!
'For a gentle, winning childhood, is the fairest thing
can be:
To be good make thy endeavour,
Childhood's hours
Are life's sweet flowers,
And childhood cannot last for ever,'
Quoth the bluebells on the lea.

ANGUS M. MACKAY.

"Then she heard the sweetest singing
Of a lark above her winging."

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Chatterbox.

Her Majesty Queen Victoria.
(The Children's Friend.)

THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND.

ON February 8, 1876, the Queen visited the East end of London, accompanied by the Princess Beatrice. In passing through the wards the Queen heard from the chaplain that one little patient of about five years old had said that 'she should get well if she could only see the Queen.' Her Majesty at once approached the child's cot, shook hands with her, patted her pale cheek tenderly, and said, 'My darling, I hope you will soon be a little better.'

The great, bright Sun shines all the day
Up in the calm blue sky;
Rising with many a dazzling ray,
Sinking 'mid crimson clouds away
To rest right royally.

But he's not too great to send his light
To the daisies sweet and small;
He kisses them with his beams so bright,
These tiny suns of gold and white.
The great Sun loves them all.

The great Queen dwells in her palace grand,
In wealth and royal state;
The great and noble of every land
Humbly among her courtiers stand;
Princes around her wait.

But she's not too great to come and see
The little ones, poor and small;
She smiles on the children tenderly,
And they look for her coming eagerly:
She is mother of them all.

The great God dwells in the Heaven so high,
'Mid angels pure and bright;
Calmly He dwells in majesty,
Far above earth, and sea, and sky,
In His own eternal light.

But He's not too great His eyes to bend
On the little children here;
There's none too small for His love to tend,
Too poor and sad to be called the friend
And child of Our Father dear. F. W.

A STORY OF DUNGEON LIFE.

THERE was living in Paris, in 1871, a Polish lady, the Countess of K. She wore a very singular brooch. It is encircled by twenty precious stones, on a ground of blue enamel, covered in the centre by glass. And what do you suppose this brooch contains? Not a portrait, or a lock of hair, but just four common pins, bent together in the form of a star. And she wears this because her husband, a Polish nobleman, was put into prison because he was thought to be a secret enemy of the Government. He was imprisoned in a dark, deep dungeon, far down under the ground. He had no light, and never could tell when it was day or when it was night. He had no one to speak to, for no one was allowed to see him except the keeper of the prison, and he was not permitted to speak to his prisoner. He had nothing to do. Days, weeks, months passed on, and he was still in his dungeon. He was never brought to trial, and, poor man, he was most miserable. He thought he should lose his senses, for his reason began to give way. Feeling all over his coat one day, he found four pins, and he actually wept for joy; yet what could they be to him? He took them from his coat, and threw them on the floor of his dungeon, and then he went down on his hands and knees, and felt all over the floor till he found them. When he had succeeded in finding them, he scattered them on the floor again; and could you have gone into his dungeon, you would have found him groping for his four pins. When, after six years' imprisonment, his cell was opened to set him free, they found him on his hands and knees in the dark, groping for his four pins. It was all his work, nor would he leave his prison without taking his pins with him. They were his best friends, because they had given him something to do in his solitude and confinement, and his Countess had them made into a brooch, which she valued more than gold. They had preserved her husband's reason. L. C. F.

FANNY'S BARGAIN.

FANNY BARTON was very fond of finery, and liked nothing better than to dress herself up and fancy she was a grand lady. Her parents were homely people, and disapproved of this tendency in their daughter, but they told each other that it was natural to all young girls, and that no great harm was likely to come of it, since they lived in the country, where there was not much chance of display—where there were no shop-windows to tempt to extravagance, and few acquaintances with whom to compete. But Fanny was their only child, so she got things a good deal her own way; had always plenty of pocket-money, and managed somehow to have smart clothes, and her hair dressed after the latest fashion. Many a sigh she heaved after further vanities, and very hard she felt it that her store of trinkets was so limited,

and her opportunities of seeing the gay world were so few.

'Hark, Bess!' cried John Barton to his wife, looking up from the paper which he had just brought in from their nearest town, where he had been to market that afternoon. 'Here's a queer business! Whoever could have thought of any one being so artful! and a female, too!'

Here he read out a tale of imposture—how a woman, decently dressed and of pleasant appearance and manner, had been going about from house to house in the neighbourhood, imposing upon servant-girls and others in various ways. She had obtained help from one by pleading distress; to another she had sold forged pawn-tickets; while again and again she had raised money on articles that in several cases had proved to be stolen.

At this point Fanny uttered a little scream of dismay, and her parents, glancing quickly towards her, were surprised to see her eyes starting in fright, and all the colour gone from her cheeks.

'Why, child, what is it?' they cried. 'Whatever ails you?'

'Oh, father! father! read it again!' she said, in a trembling voice. 'The things stolen, you say? and the police after her, and all? How dreadful!'

'You are right there, lass; it *is* dreadful that any one should be so wicked and cunning. But why should *you* take on so?' for Fanny was crying by this time, and seemed altogether in great trouble.

'It says—doesn't it, father—that she is tall, and has a low forehead, and very pretty teeth?'

'Yes; but what of that?'

'Oh, I've been so foolish, and you will be so angry. Perhaps I shall be taken to prison! Oh, if the police should come, what shall I do? what shall I do?' sobbed Fanny.

'What should you be taken to prison for?' said Barton. 'Surely you can't know anything of this wretched woman?'

'You'll never forgive me; but how could I know that anything was wrong? how could I tell that the things were stolen?' pleaded Fanny. 'And they were so pretty, and I was so sorry for her, and she said she wanted the money so bad, for if she had not decent clothes how could she go into her new place? And—oh, mother, it must be all right'—and the girl brightened with a sudden beam of hope. 'It was Mrs. Beresford of Utton Grange that had engaged her, so she must have a good character. It cannot be all lies as she told.'

'Mostly, I expect. But, come, tell us everything, dear,' said Mrs. Barton, in an encouraging tone. 'You've been silly, no doubt; but I can't see that you've done any wrong, save for keeping a secret from father and me. Now let's hear.'

The story was rather rambling and confused, owing to Fanny's agitation, but the chief facts were plain enough. Partly from compassion, but more still from the desire to possess some tawdry trinkets, offered at the door by a woman answering to the description in the paper, Fanny had given in exchange for these all the money in her possession, besides various substantial articles of clothing. She had never been thoroughly satisfied with her bargain, but the woman had talked her over, and promised as soon as she had got a handsome pair of earrings out of pawn to bring them, as a further return for Fanny's generosity.

'You've been a goose, and no mistake!' was Barton's comment; 'and you deserve to be done, as of course you have been. And now, fetch the things down, and let us see them.'

Fanny obeyed; and then, taking up the paper, she read the paragraph for herself, while her father and mother made their examination. The articles bought were trumpery enough, but there was one that arrested their attention and made them glance at each other inquiringly. It was a chain of beads, to which was attached a heart-shaped pendant made of Derbyshire spar.

'Why, Bess, don't you know it? It's the very same we bought at Buxton, that cheap trip the Whitsuntide that we were married. I wanted it for you, you remember, but you would give it to one of your little ladies at the Hall as a keepsake. Well, if this isn't a queer chance.'

'There's no mistake,' said Mrs. Barton, looking at the trinket with eyes of wonder. 'I remember quite well the funny shape, like an old man's head, this blue line takes. I should know it anywhere. And so would Miss May, I am sure, for wasn't she pleased with it?'

'But it's so long since,' said Fanny, when she was told. 'Miss May may have given it away years ago. She's a grown-up lady now.'

'Yes, but I don't think she would part with it. She was fond of me, because I nursed her when she was a baby; and she said she should always keep it. No, this has been stolen from her, if ever anything was.'

Fanny's fear returned. 'Then they will call me a receiver of stolen goods! Oh, father! can't they put people in prison for that?'

'You need not be afraid, child. You never guessed aught was wrong. But one thing you must make up your mind to'—and John Barton spoke firmly. 'You have parted with your money and clothes, and you are pretty sure by this time, I should think, that you'll never set eyes on the earrings. And now you must part with these things, too; for I shall take them to the town myself to-morrow, and give them up at the police-station, to see if the folk can't be found who own them, and if that woman can't be somehow traced by them. And your mother or you must pen a line to Miss May to tell her her chain and heart is safe, and she shall have it back all in good time. And now listen, my girl; I hope that this will be a lesson to you not to keep things back from mother and me, and not to crave so after finery. You are eaten up with vanity, that's what it is, or you would never have listened to the tales of a strange woman at the door.'

Notwithstanding a certain severity in her father's manner, Fanny's tears stopped flowing, and her face was calm again. Her great fear was removed, and she felt the loss of the trinkets to be light by comparison.

'And I never should have dared to wear them,' she said, 'lest mother might question me. Oh, I am glad it's all out now, and I don't think I shall ever be so foolish again. But it wasn't all because I was

vain; I was sorry for the woman, too. And she said the beads were the last thing that her brother gave her before he went to sea, and he's drowned; and she cried ever so. Dear me, do you think it could be true, mother?'

But a letter from Miss May solved all doubt. The chain, along with several other ornaments, had been stolen from her room about a year before. As the loss had exposed several people to suspicion, Miss May was glad the real thief was likely to be traced. She was glad, too, she said, to recover her old nurse's keepsake, and to show her pleasure she was sending her a warm winter gown as a present.

Perhaps some weeks before Fanny might have wished the gift had been to herself, and something, moreover, of a showier nature; but the late affair had checked her vanity, and she could say heartily,—

'I'm so pleased, mother! The dress is twenty times better than the beads, or than any of those stupid ornaments. I'm so glad I am rid of them! I don't think I shall ever wish so much for such things again.'

EMMA RHODES.

THE SISTERS.

(*Continued from page* 286.)

CHAPTER XII.—LILIAN'S WORK.

SOME days after Mrs. M'Gregor had finished telling her story to her grand-daughters, the two girls were sitting together on the terrace. Lilian was working, Helena seemed to be deep in a book. Lilian's needle had been passing in and out of her work in rather a vague manner for some minutes, and she had been stealing a glance or two at her sister, when suddenly down went needle, work and all, on her lap, and she said, 'It's all very well pretending to read like that, Helena. I am sure you don't know a single sentence on that page you have open before you, any more than I know what I am making with my needle and thread. You know you cannot help thinking of poor dear granny's story and Uncle Donald, Uncle James, and Janet Ramsay, any more than I can. They are all mixed up in my

head together in a terrible muddle, and, puzzle it out which way I will, I can't make any of them come straight; and I do so wish them all to be happy.'

Helena shut up her book and laughed. 'I confess, Lily, that I can think of little else. It is all in a tangle, and I wish it could be set to rights. But it needs a magician!'

'I don't think it does,' was Lilian's answer, 'if every one would do their duty!'

'I hope you don't expect me to do anything more? I think I have done too much already!'

'You're laughing at me!' rejoined Lilian; 'and I was never more in earnest in my life. You know, Helena, I hardly like to say it to you, but I think that granny's partiality for Uncle Malcolm, for which she blames herself so much, when he was a boy, is clinging to her still. Why should she keep the estate in trust for him? How can he be any more worthy of it now than he was when he was a boy,—staying away from her without word or sign, as he has done all these years?'

'Perhaps he may be dead!' put in Helena.

'Well, if he is, are Uncle Donald and Uncle James never to have any of the property? But is it always to be kept in trust for one who may never be seen or heard of?'

'Granny thinks, I expect,' said Helena, 'that Uncle Malcolm might have married, and there may be some children, and they——'

'Oh, I've no patience with it all!' broke in Lilian: 'there will be no end to it, you see. The estate will always be "held in trust," for there will be no chance of knowing when one of these children may not turn up.'

'And do leave granny alone to do as she likes,' Helena said. 'What business can it be of ours?'

'I hoped so much from that letter of granny's to Uncle James,' said Lilian; 'but he is not come back, you see, and I don't know whether she has heard from him or not. I think I really will ask granny if Uncle James is coming back. If it makes her angry I can't help it. I cannot think why he—O Helena, look there! There is Uncle Donald! and, and—yes, it is Uncle James with him, and they are coming straight here! Oh! what shall we do? Do let us get out of the way. Uncle James will not care to see us.'

'He will—to see you, Lily, I should think,' said Helena, rather sadly, laying her hand on her young sister's arm to keep her.

Lilian could do nothing but look with anxiety at the two gentlemen now approaching them. Yes, their faces were bright. Uncle James came straight to Lilian.

'Thank you, my dear child!' he said, as he stooped and kissed her; 'you do not know what you may have done for me and my life—restored its brightness, I hope!'

'I, Uncle James!' cried Lilian. 'I meant to do some good, but I have not begun to do it yet.'

'I hope it may be done,' said her uncle, smiling; 'you have been at least the instrument of restoring hope to my life.'

Lilian still looked bewildered. He went on: 'Uncle Donald tells me that it was through you that the whole truth became known. I went away from here not only very sad at heart, but so completely puzzled. Everything seems clear now; and I am going at once to Mr. Ramsay, to see if he will plead my cause with Janet. It seems strange,' he added, with a short laugh, 'to be telling all this to you children, but you seem to have contrived so to mix yourselves up with my affairs that I suppose you must hear all about the matter to the end.'

'You will not be hard on Kate; will you, Uncle James?' said Lilian.

'No, Lily, certainly not; I shall try to get into her good graces. I do not wonder at her objecting to part from her sister. But I must try to soften down her objections.'

And the two gentlemen walked on. Lily turned to Helena:—

'You see Uncle James is not at all inclined to be hard upon Kate.'

'No,' said Helena. 'But she will certainly sink very low in every one's esteem, and we do not know yet how Mr. Ramsay may take it. I remember he was terribly severe to her after Janet's bad illness.'

'I cannot imagine that such a good man as Mr. Ramsay would be hard with any one,' said Lilian.

'It is his own uprightness that makes him hard on the faults of others,' replied her sister.

Lilian did not speak for a minute or two, and then she only said, 'That is very strange! I can understand a good man sternly rebuking a fault in another, but I cannot understand his being what we should call "hard."'

And then, taking up her work, she walked towards the house, and as she went she said to herself,—

'Oh, how happy it all is! It's all going to be right now! The only thing is Helena thinking this about dear old Mr. Ramsay. I am sure it is not true. Kate has been talking to her. But how shocking to talk about one's own father like that! I wonder if she has done so?'

CHAPTER XIII.—WEDDING BELLS.

'Kirkton, November 8th.

'It is all over! Uncle James and Janet Ramsay were married this morning, and the bells have been ringing their hearts out all day.

'Granny sent me upstairs to lie down; she said I looked so tired, and there is to be an evening party here by-and-by. But I asked her if I might write my journal instead, as there were so many things I wished to put down; and as I knew I could not go to sleep, I told her I thought writing would quiet my excitement, and do my head good. And she laughed, saying, "If you think so, Lily, you may certainly write."

'It was a funny month to be married in, was not it—November? People fancy November so cold, and foggy, and dull, and no flowers to make a wedding look pretty. I should like any one who ever thought such a thing just to have seen our house and the skies to-day. Our house is as full of lovely flowers as if it were June or July. It seemed as if every one we knew sent flowers, and the gardener here has taken such pains with those in the hot-houses ever since he knew this wedding was coming off. The wedding breakfast was here; granny persuaded Mr. Ramsay to let her have it so, because Ivor Cottage is so small, that we could not have had

half so many of our friends. Granny said she so much wished it to be like what our dear mother's wedding was so many years ago, when not only all the relations of both families were asked to be present, but all friends from far and near, and she begged Mr. Ramsay to "humour an old woman's whim." So he agreed, but he is so quiet himself, that I think he would have liked better that it should have been a more quiet affair. And we have had such a gathering! Aunt Margaret is here from Hatherleigh Manor, and Mabel and Bernard. Our dear grandfather wrote word that he was too old to come so far, but he sent Janet a necklace and bracelets set with pearls and emeralds—so lovely!

'The bridemaids were Kate Ramsay, Helena, Mab, and myself, and two girls who are really our nearest neighbours, living about three miles from this place, Christina and Jessie M'Ivor; and we wore white dresses and sashes of the M'Gregor tartan. Our dresses were given us by grandmother, and Uncle James gave us each a beautiful locket with a monogram in pearl. The bride wore a splendid white satin dress, with such a train! and some pearl ornaments, which granny gave her. And the skies—I have been writing all this about our dresses, and have forgotten the skies. November, indeed—"cold, and foggy, and dull!" Nothing of the kind, but a bright sparkling frost; and the sun did shine on our bride, and she looked so happy!

(Concluded in our next.)

CRAY THORNTON'S CHESTNUTS.

JUST at nightfall a rough-looking man was walking past 'Chestnut Woods,' when he fancied he saw some one gliding stealthily through the underbrush. He stopped and looked more closely; but now there was not so much as the rustle of a leaf to betray the presence of another. He turned into a narrow footpath, and at that moment a boy sprang up from behind a clump of bushes.

'Is this you, Cray?' he exclaimed. 'What on earth are you here for at this time of day? and what have you got in your bag?'

'I'm going home, and I've got chestnuts in my bag,' was the reply.

'But I thought the chestnuts were all gone.'

'They were almost gone when I began to pick. But Mr. Oliver said I might have what was left; and so I've been in the woods every day this week. I've got every one there was.'

'All right. But what made you skulk along so?'

'Because—because—I was afraid somebody would see me and tell father. If they did, he'd sell them for rum. Nobody knows, only mother. You won't tell; will you, Mr. Weston?'

'Not a word, Cray. You needn't be afraid of my getting you into trouble. What have you done with your chestnuts?'

'Mother's hid them somewhere, and when Mr. Waters comes along, she's going to buy me some shoes with them. I haven't got any shoes.'

'So that's it! Well, you need the shoes, and if you haven't quite enough, tell Waters I'll make it up. He'll trust me if I do get drunk once in a while.'

'Oh, Mr. Weston! I wish you didn't. You'd be so good if you didn't; and perhaps father would be good, too, if he didn't drink rum.'

'He ought to, with such a boy as you. If my Jimmy and his mother had lived, I should have been different from what I am now.' And as he said this, Mr. Weston brushed the tears from his eyes.

'You won't meet your father to-night. He's got some money to spend before he'll come home; so hurry along to your mother, and good luck to you both.'

The speaker was one of those men who are usually described as 'good-hearted, kind, and generous.' He had a true Yankee genius for the Yankee trade of tinkering, and wherever he might go was pretty sure of being welcomed as the very person whose presence was most desired. He might have been rich, and yet he was poor, living in a bit of a house on the further edge of the wood.

After he parted from Cray Thornton he walked slowly on, sometimes stopping for a moment, as he thought sadly of his wasted life. He was never ill-natured or quarrelsome, but he was his own worst enemy, and this he knew so well that he needed not to be reminded of the fact.

A week had passed when he saw Cray Thornton's father entering a grog-shop. He quickened his steps, and rushed in just in time to see the bag of chestnuts carried by Mr. Thornton poured into a half-bushel measure.

'Hold on there!' he exclaimed. 'Those chestnuts are stolen property, and I can prove it. I've done some mean things in the way of drinking, but I never got so bad as to steal chestnuts from a boy. Thornton stole them from Cray. I know he did, and if there's not enough here to see fair play, it's a pity. Cray hasn't got a pair of shoes to his feet, and he picked those chestnuts one by one, after everybody else had given up. Thornton, you're a brute if you sell them for liquor. I never abused my boy, and if he'd lived he shouldn't have gone barefoot such weather as this. If you've got human feelings you'll stop drinking, and take care of your family.'

'You're a fine fellow to preach!' was the sneering answer. 'I'll quit drinking when you do.'

'You promise that, will you?'

'Yes; I'll quit when you do.'

'Then here goes—I've done with grog while I live. I swear it.'

With his right hand still uplifted, Mr. Weston gazed at his companion with a fixed look, until the latter, as if moved by a sudden impulse, raised his own hand, and repeated, 'I swear it!' reverently and solemnly.

'I will take back Cray's chestnuts,' then said the father in a husky voice.

Without hesitation they were returned to him. The spectators were awe-struck by what had occurred, and the silence remained unbroken.

Mr. Thornton left the grog-shop, followed close by his friends. They, too, were silent. It was no time for talking; but from that day there was plenty in two homes where before there had been poverty, and happiness where there had been before fear and wretchedness.

MARY D. CHELLIS.

Cray and Mr. Weston.

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Chatterbox.

"Granny clasped her hands together, and said, 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.'"

THE SISTERS.

(*Concluded from page* 295.)

I HAVE not written any journal for some weeks, but I must tell a little of how the wedding came about. Granny's letter, telling the whole truth, brought Uncle James back as soon as ever he could come. He just went to Mr. Ramsay and let him know all, exacting a promise from him that nothing should make him hard upon Kate. Mr. Ramsay was very angry with Kate; he said he had been so deceived. He had been very much astonished at Janet's decision about her engagement, but he had quite come to think that she could not have cared much about it to have so easily broken it off. Then he finished by saying, "I ought not to have been deceived; I ought to have been more clear-sighted. Janet has been doing this all her life, giving in to Kate, but I certainly could not have imagined that she would have thought it right to do so in this case."

'"Kate worked upon her feelings of affection for you," said Uncle James.

'"Ah! well!" replied dear old Mr. Ramsay, "it will be dull enough for me; but I will not have the happiness of two lives thrown away. And it is quite as well that the sisters should be separated."

'I wonder whether any one will ever come to say that of me and Helena? I should break my heart if they did, I think.

'Then Uncle James went straight to Kate. She was so dreadfully frightened when she saw him, but he was so kind that she could only cry and say how very sorry she was. Kate does repent after her outbursts, and her repentance has been very real for all the mischief she did here, I am sure. She came to us and begged that we would try to love her a little again, and she said she must have told somebody about it all herself soon, if Uncle James had not come back, for Janet's white face and sad ways were torture to her.

'She said, "I have suffered such agony that I do not think I can give way to selfishness again. And they have been so kind since they knew all! I shall pray to God that I may spend my whole life in comforting and cheering my father."

'And then Janet was sorry, too, for Mr. Ramsay actually scolded her. He said he must scold somebody, and Uncle James had never asked him not to scold Janet, and so he should do that, for she quite deserved it. He was serious about it, though, and got Janet to see that she was wrong too, and that she had no business to give up a solemn engagement so lightly. He said he had given his blessing and sanction to her betrothal, and it was a false step that she had taken.

'So Janet cried too, and Uncle James came in to Ivor Cottage just then, and he was vexed with Mr. Ramsay. But Mr. Ramsay told him he should not retract a word of what he had said to Janet, and granny when she heard of it, said he was quite right. So in the end it came right all round.

CHAPTER XIV.—EXTRACTS FROM LILIAN'S JOURNAL.

'NOVEMBER 20TH.—Such a wonderful thing has happened! We were all getting very quiet here again, and beginning to think that December was close at hand, and Uncle James and "Aunt" Janet would soon be here to spend Christmas with us, when this morning granny received a letter which made her turn so white and her hands shake so much that Uncle Donald got up quickly and went round to her to see what was the matter. He saw something in the letter which she held up to him, which made him put his arm round her and lead her gently out of the room.

'For some time we girls knew nothing, but in about an hour Uncle Donald came back, and said, "My dear mother tells me that you know all about my poor brother Malcolm, who left his home when quite a young lad. We have just heard a piece of very sad news; and yet I am sure that, though sad enough, truly in one way it is a relief to my dear mother, as it has been terrible to her to think that poor Malcolm allowed so many, many years to pass without sending her word or sign. He is dead; he was drowned while bathing in some river in Australia, two years after he left England. It seems that when he left us he took passage in a ship bound for Sydney. Somehow or other he contrived to elude all our inquiries. He hired himself out as a farm-labourer, and was taken off to a farm in a lonely part of the country. He was drowned by accident, and the farmer who employed him had him decently buried there. He says Malcolm called himself Maurice Granton, and in a little Prayer-book found in one of his pockets, the only book he had with him, there was this inscription on the fly-leaf,—'M. M'G., from A. G.' Now, curiously enough, this small book, which the farmer carefully preserved, has been the means of identifying my poor brother. Alexander Gordon, our cousin, who gave him that little Prayer-book and wrote his initials in it, has been for the last four years in a bank at Melbourne. He was up the country with a shooting-party this year, and was entertained by the very farmer who was poor Malcolm's master; while they were sitting round the fire after supper the last night of their stay, their host pulled out this book from his pocket and handed it to one of the party, saying, "I show this little book to every Englishman or Scotchman who comes this way, to see if they can identify the poor lad who died on this farm some years back. He was a gentleman by birth, and came from Scotland, I'm sure of that. I suppose I ought to have set on foot more inquiries about him, but you see I'm a busy man, and we get a good many gentlemen out here one way and another. Some take a fancy to our roughish life; this one had run away from a good home, I expect, but never could I get him to tell me anything about himself."

'"Of course, Alexander thought of Malcolm directly, and on the Prayer-book being handed to him he knew it as the one he had given his cousin when they were boys together, and now has written to us telling your grandmother the sad news!"

'Of course, this has made us all very sad, for we cannot help feeling for poor dear granny, who has suffered so bitterly.

'*December* 1*st*.—Uncle James and Aunt Janet are come back. Granny would have them back, and it is beautiful to see how Aunt Janet falls into her place as the daughter of the house, comforting and supporting poor granny, who looks so broken down with her sorrow. And Aunt Janet is such a kind loving companion to Helena and myself! They go to Edinburgh to live in the beginning of the new year —so they say, at least. For my part I cannot see how granny can bear to part with Aunt Janet, now she knows her worth.

'*December* 25*th*.—A very happy, though very quiet Christmas Day; all together, both pairs of sisters. Helena and I will never quarrel, and I do not think poor Kate will ever feel anything but the dearest love for Aunt Janet again.

CHAPTER XV.—JOY BELLS.

'*Kirkton, November* 8*th*.

'A YEAR ago to-day Uncle James and Aunt Janet were married, and now again our bells are ringing. The day is lovely, and again our house is decked with flowers; for to-day a little son of theirs has been christened, and we are just come back from church. I shall never forget one or two things that happened.

'Grandmother held the baby at the font. She was its godmother, and as she gave its name, "Walter Malcolm," I saw her just glance at the memorial window, and there was such a look of thankfulness and peace on her face. When we left the church she refused Uncle James's arm, shaking her head and saying, "No, no, walk on with your wife; I want to see all my dear ones in front of me. I have a fancy for Lilian's arm. Child, come here!" and I went up and gave her my arm, a little awe-struck.

'Her manner, the solemn service in which we had been all joining, the remembrance that grandmother's hopes had been realized at last all combined to impress me. As we passed out at the churchyard gate granny clasped her hands together and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace;" and then, as if talking to herself, "But that is presumptuous in such a one as I have been. Lord, keep Thy servant from evil even to the end; Thy young servant just beginning life, Thine aged servant drawing near its close." She did not speak again for some minutes. Then looking tenderly at a soft mass of cashmere, swans'-down, and lace which Helena was carrying in her arms, she said again as if to herself, "God has granted me my desire. I have seen an heir to our name born to our house, and they will not spoil him. James is made of sterner stuff than some of us, and Janet is a true woman, true wife, not seeking to rule, but ever loving and serving."

'There are the bells again, and I hear the bagpipes. I must leave my writing and go down.'

FOLLOWING THE FASHIONS.

NOW-A-DAYS, when every class of people is too apt to copy the fashions and ape the manners of the grade above them, often greatly to their own hurt and disfigurement, it may be well to tell once more the story of the shoemaker of Norwich, who lived in the reign of our eighth Henry.

He, John Drakes, must have been a personage of an aspiring taste, for, coming into a tailor's shop, and finding some fine French 'tawny' cloth lying there, which had been sent to be made into a gown for Sir Philip Calthrop, he ordered the tailor to buy as much of the same stuff for him, and make him a gown of it exactly of the same fashion as the knight's, whatever that might be. Sir Philip arriving shortly afterwards to be measured, saw the additional cloth, and asked to whom it belonged.

'To John Drakes,' quoth the tailor; 'who will have it made in the self-same fashion as yours.'

'Good,' returned the knight; 'it shall be so: but see thee, Master Tailor, I will have mine as full of cuts as thy shears can make it!'

Both garments were finished according to order. The shoemaker on receiving his gown slashed almost to shreds began to abuse the tailor, but received for answer,—

'I have done nothing but what you bade me; as Sir Philip's gown is, so have I made yours.'

'Well then,' growled the shoemaker, 'I will never wear a gentleman's fashion again!' H. A. F.

FROM THE LIVERPOOL APPLE AND POTATO MARKET.

SOME years ago I had to appear as witness in a case relating to the sale and warranty of a picture. It was my first experience of law and law-courts, and I hope it may be my last, although I had every reason to be pleased with the treatment I received during my short stay in the witness-box.

The hotel where we were first obliged to put up was not comfortable, and I got up early and strolled into the town. There is no more delightful sensation of freedom than feeling a perfect stranger in a strange town.

I wandered at haphazard, and came to what I called, for want of better knowledge, the Liverpool Apple and Potato Market; these being the chief articles exposed for sale.

A smart bright red cart, picked out with black and white, of a pattern new to me, with a fat dun pony, attracted my attention: it was in a prominent place, and there was a well-to-do-ness about it which pleased me. The horse itself looked like a prosperous, self-relying tradesman.

The morning was cold; it was the first of April, so the lad stood up against the animal, and borrowed some of its warm rug that covered its loins. I could not resist making a sketch of the pretty group—sympathy between man and beast, master and servant, always charms me. It is evidence of our better nature.

I dreaded chaff of the rough north-country townfolk; but although it was All-fools' Day—the first of April—I was not annoyed or disturbed in the least.

It was interesting to me to see the quantity of American apples in casks which were there. The lovely old Newtown pippin was not among them —they are scarce now—with their black dots and

red cheeks, and their flavour of pine-apple and strawberry. An apple of the same kind and excellence used to be much prized at all the villages near Kronenberg, in the duchy of Nassau, Germany; long celebrated for its nurseries of fruit-trees, which a good clergyman founded in order to enrich the poor cultivators of a poor soil. Maybe some emigrant from that part of Germany to America took a few young *plants* of his favourite wedding-apples, as that sort was called in the district, to America, and maybe these nurslings were the origin of the Newtown pippin.

In the same neighbourhood are forests of the edible chestnut—ancient trees, whose ancestors were brought there from Palestine by crusading knights. Various lichens grow on them, not natives of Germany but of the East, and this fact helps to prove the truth of the tradition. The people of Kronenberg live chiefly by their fruit-trees. Quantities of so-called Normandy pippins come from there.

A TRUSTY SERVANT.

By the Author of 'Earth's Many Voices.'

'LONG years ago, when I was young,'
So old folk love to say,
'A servant of the house served on
Until your dying day.

And your good fortune was his own,
In griefs he shared with you;
But times are gone, and those true folk,
Why, they are all gone too.'

When thus I hear the old folk talk,
I pray them say not so,
For I've a servant true and tried
As ever lived, I know.

A servant who obeys my word,
The look upon my face;
A servant who would sooner die
Than seek a change of place.

His wages are his humble board,
Also his daily bread;
And, well content, no wish for more
E'er enters in his head.

Good, trusty Jack! he comes at call,
He runs where'er I bid,
He droops with ne'er a saucy word
Whenever he is chid.

He guards whate'er I trust to him,
It may be but my chair;
And I come back, no matter when,
And find him keeper there.

A servant dutiful and kind,
And trusty too is he;
The old folk were not truer served
Than my dog Jack serves me.

'ALL'S WELL!'

A SEQUEL TO 'HALT!'

CHAPTER I.

WE never thought for a moment that father would agree to our going; it was much too good even to be thought of. I think the postman gave a louder rap than usual when he brought that letter, and the big envelope pushed open the little glass door of the letter-box and fell out on to the door-mat, as if it was in a tremendous hurry to get to us: just like Larry himself, who used generally to come into the house, knocking his head against the door, and tumbling over the carpet. For this big letter was from our old friend Larry, who had left school two years before, to go to sea with his father, Captain Brady. He had been to see us once or twice since then—not a bit changed, except for his clothes, but just the same jolly, good-natured, grinning, unlucky, queer old Larry, as ever. There was no mistaking who the letter was from; the very direction was Larry all over! There was a distinct grin about the big 'Tom Carter, Esq.,' and as for the rest of the direction, it was a wonder the postman made it out at all, it was so blotted. But if we had had any doubt about the writer, we had only to turn the envelope over, for there was stamped a dolphin, and under it '*Ss. Larry's Luck;*' for Captain Brady was captain of one of the 'Dolphin' line of steam-ships.

The letter came in the middle of the day, and I ran out and picked it up, and brought it into the dining-room, where mother was sitting at work, and Bertie and I read it out to her, making it out together; for Larry's writing was not easy to read.

This is what it said:—

'*Ss. Larry's Luck, Glasgow,*
'*September 10th.*

'DEAR TOM AND BERTIE,

'We're bound for the Mediterranean. We're taking in cargo for Palermo and Naples, and are advertised to sail on the 25th. It will only be a six-weeks' run or so, and the long and the short of it is, that my father wants to know if your father will let you and Bertie come with us. He says he'll look after you both, and he'd have written himself, only he's so busy. He says I'd better say there's a stewardess, first-rate cabins, and all that sort of thing, as your mother will like to know. Be sure and come, or beware of the vengeance of Yours, LARRY.'

Bertie and I gasped when we had finished the letter; the very idea seemed to take our breath away like a sudden puff of sea air. We neither of us spoke a word, but went on arranging our birds' eggs, which we had been busy with before: but it was not half as interesting as it was before that letter came.

Mother, too, made no remark; but she went on with her work, which was darning a pile of winter socks, which reminded us of packing school-trunks, and going back to dull old Highmore; for the holidays were over in another week.

Happy Larry! who had not to go back to school; but had holidays all the year round!

I was the first, as usual, to break the silence.

'Of course, father won't let us go.'

'Of course not,' my mother answered, cheerfully; 'so we won't think of it, Tom; for it will only spoil everything else, and we must not spoil the last week of the holidays.'

But I could not help thinking of it, and it certainly did spoil everything else, even the Crystal Palace, where we went in the afternoon; and it takes a great deal to spoil that. I don't know if Bertie thought as much of it as I did, but he did not say anything, though I saw him look queer in the Pompeian Court; and I could not think why for a moment, for I had quite forgotten where Pompeii was, and it was not of those sort of things that I thought when I went sailing in fancy in the *Larry's Luck*. Even the fireworks did not seem so splendid as usual, the fiery pigeons were not quite what they were; the set-piece of 'the bank of primroses and blue-bells' was spoilt by the smoke; and, as for the 'grand discharge of two thousand shells and rockets,' I found myself yawning in the very middle of it. I knew all the time it was very ungrateful of me, and I did try to hide my feelings as much as I could; for it was very kind of mother to take us, and she seemed taking more than usual pains to amuse and please us: but I am afraid she guessed something of what I felt, for she can see everything in one's mind wonderfully, without one's saying a word.

It was late when we reached home, and when we had had some supper we went straight up to bed, only just looking in to say 'good-night' to father on our way up. We did not hear what he thought of Larry's letter, which we had left lying on the mantelpiece for him to read; but I knew he would talk it over with mother after we were in bed.

'Well,' I said to myself, with a sigh, 'it's no use thinking of it; for there's not the smallest chance.'

I could not go to sleep, however; and I lay tossing, and turning, and listening to the noises downstairs, and the rattling of the cabs in the street outside. I must have fallen asleep at last, however, for I woke from feeling the clothes being gently pulled straight, which had got all in a tumble from my tossing, and a soft hand pushing the hair off my hot forehead. There was no need to open my eyes to know who was there; for there is no mistaking mother's hand, and she always comes in to see Bertie and me at night as she goes up to bed. When I opened my eyes I saw father was there too, shading the candle that the light should not wake me.

'Well, Tom,' he said, 'you're awake, are you? And nearly beside yourself with this mad plan of Larry's, I'll be bound!'

'I'm sorry,' I said, getting up in bed, and rubbing my eyes, and putting one arm round mother as she sat on the side of my bed; 'but I'll get over it in a day or two.'

'Well,' my father went on, putting the candle down on the chest of drawers, 'we have been talking it over, your mother and I; and——'

'Why, you never mean to let us go?' I burst out.

'Now, Tom, be quiet, and stop in bed, will you? I have not half made up my mind yet; but the doctor

said a sea voyage would strengthen Bertie more than anything, and this seems a good chance of one for him. But then, on the other hand, there's Highmore, and missing a whole term there, and you can't afford to do that, Master Tom, just now; but your mother has been persuading me out of all my better sense, and telling me that you will learn a great deal, and work all the harder, when you come home.'

I missed the end of this, for I was giving mother a hug.

'Do you really like us to go, mother?' I said. 'Really and truly?'

'Like it!' said my father; 'I think she would like to cut her right hand off if it would do any good to you or Bertie!'

And then I saw there were shining tears in mother's eyes, which she would not let fall.

'I am a coward, Tom,' she said; 'a sad coward about my boys. It is like a fussy old hen, who wants to keep her ducklings under her wing always; and you see, Tom,' she went on, with a smile that had a little quiver in it, 'my ducklings want to take to the water, and it's only natural.'

And then I put my arms round her neck, and declared that 'I did not want to go;' that 'I would not go;' and that 'I would much rather stay at home, or even go back to Highmore—anything rather than she should be anxious or unhappy.

But when we had talked a little, and mother tucked me up, and left me whispering that mother's love and God's providence would follow her boy wherever he went, I turned over and went to sleep, to dream that I was sailing westward with Columbus, in a vessel called *The Mother's Love*, to join the Swiss Family Robinson on their island, and I woke with the feeling that the reality was more delightful than any dream.

CHAPTER II.

It seemed as if that fortnight would never pass away to bring the 25th of September; and yet, after all, it seemed as if it had flown, it was so full of bustle and preparation. We talked of nothing, we thought of nothing, we dreamt of nothing, but the *Larry's Luck*, and all the adventures that were in store for us. The map of Europe always lay open on the table, and the Mediterranean was changed all at once from a very dull geographical fact to a kind of enchanted sea in a fairy tale. Naples was quite blotted out of the map of Europe, from my having unfortunately pointed to it with a pen full of ink; but it was so plainly painted on our minds that it did not matter: even the latitude and longitude became something more than meaningless lines across the maps.

Just fancy seeing Vesuvius with our own eyes, and walking through the streets of Pompeii! Fancy seeing and feeling the whirlpool of Charybdis, and hearing the dogs of Scylla! Fancy seeing Etna, where Ulysses suffered so much! Who could tell but what we might meet one of the gigantic Cyclops with our own eyes, or even make our way into Vulcan's workshop under Etna, where the thunder-bolts were forged! We got rather nautical in our language, and used expressions we had picked up from Captain Marryat's books, with a vague notion of the meaning of them; for our experience of the sea was limited. We always spoke of upstairs as 'up aloft,' and began most of our sentences with 'Abaft there! Hold hard!' We spoke of visitors on their way to the drawing-room as 'breakers ahead!' and of the cabs going at so many 'knots' an hour, as if we knew what a 'knot' was, which we did not.

Father wrote to Captain Brady to get more particulars about his intended voyage, and he wrote in reply more fully about it than Larry had done.

The *Larry's Luck* was to sail on the 25th for the Mediterranean, and was to call first at Almeria, a Spanish port; then to Palermo, then to Messina, then to Naples, where most of the cargo would be discharged. Then it would depend on orders from home whether he should return straight from Naples, or whether he should call at any ports on the way home. Anyhow, he thought that the voyage would take about six weeks, more or less, according to the time they were kept waiting at the different ports, and the sort of passage they got.

'The *Larry's Luck*,' he went on, 'is one of the finest of the Dolphin boats, and there's not a boat can beat her for speed, though I say it, on this side of the Atlantic or the other. But I dare say you'll say you don't want any of my yarns about my boat; you want to know how your lads will fare with us. Well, we have first-rate cabin accommodation; the saloon is amidships, and room for forty saloon passengers. We've no passengers booked yet, and it's a chance if we do; so your lads can have a choice of berths. So all I can say is, Trust your boys to me, and I'll give an eye to them, just as if they were my own; and as for Larry, he will be father, mother, and half-a-dozen brothers and sisters to them in one, and stewardess into the bargain, though we are going to take one with us.'

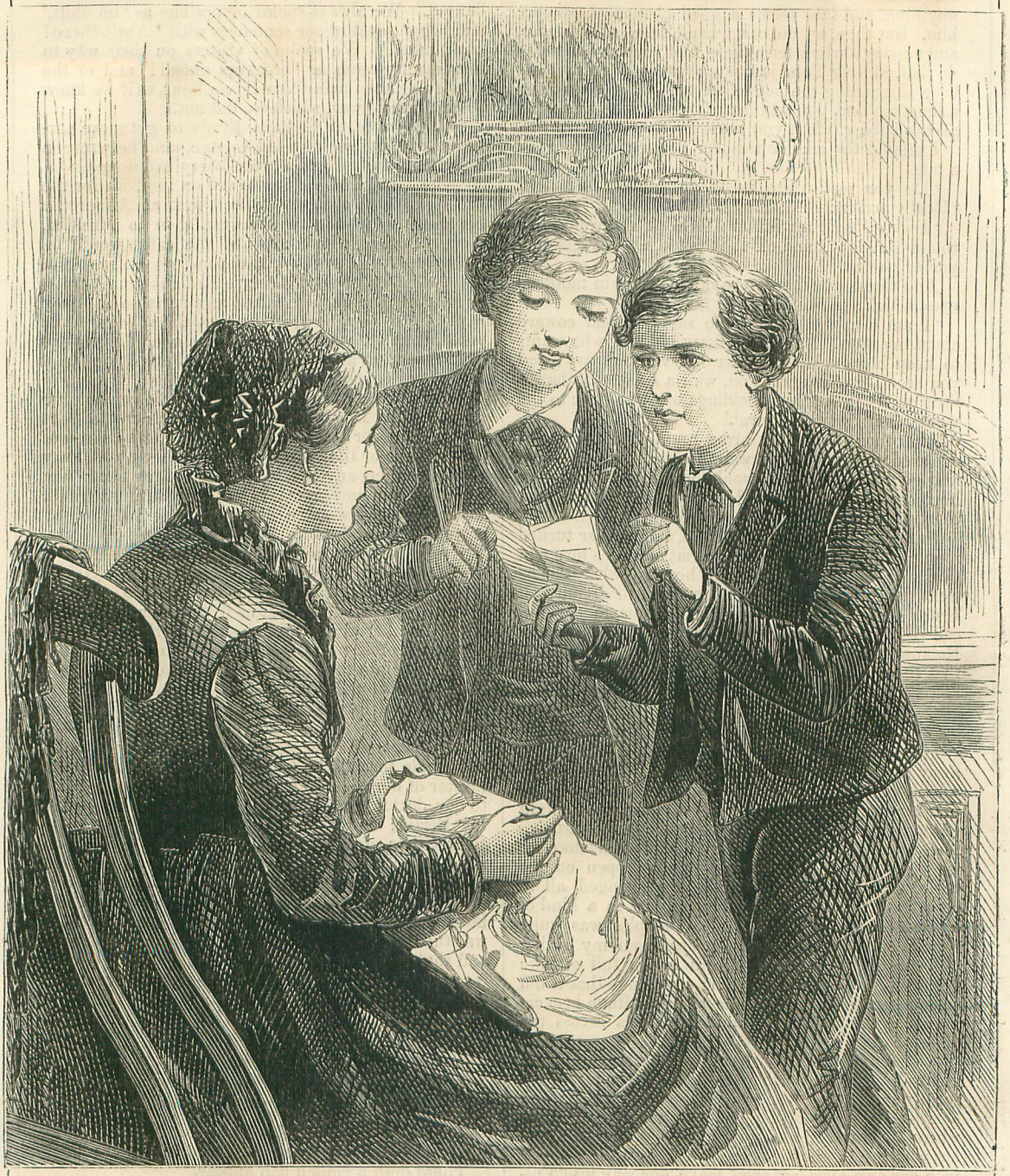
Bertie and I were both in a great flutter till it was really decided that we were to go; for it was not settled in a hurry, and father said we were not to make up our minds to it till he had heard from Dr. May, the master of our school, and Captain Brady, and spoken to our doctor, as to whether it would really be good for Bertie; and even then, if no objections arose from either of these, he had got to settle his own mind that it was a wise thing to let us go and that I was to be trusted. But at last everything was arranged. I think it was the doctor who struck the last blow to drive the nail home; for he said that it was the very thing Bertie needed to make him strong, and that if he were his own son he should not trouble for a moment about his missing a quarter at school; for he would get more good, both to mind and body from the sea-air and thorough change than from a couple of years poring over his books.

(*To be continued.*)

A RIDDLE.

WITHIN a marble dome confined,
Whose milk-white walls with silk are lined,
There doth a golden ball appear,
Bathed in a stream of crystal clear:
No doors or windows you behold,
Yet thieves break in and steal the gold.

Answer—An Egg.



Reading Larry's letter.

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Chatterbox.

Tom and Bertie welcomed by Captain Brady.

'ALL'S WELL!'

(*Continued from page* 303.)

'AS for you, Master Tom,' he said to me, with a laugh, 'I don't suppose books would do you much harm; but they won't do you much good either, I expect, if you go back to school alone. I dare say a little sea-sickness will do you good.'

'Sea-sickness!' I answered; 'I'm not such a landlubber as that!'

'Wait a bit, my man,' said the doctor; 'wait till you know what a head wind and a cross sea are!'

'It's only women and babies that are sick,' said I.

'Indeed!' he answered, with a smile. 'I'm glad to hear it.'

'It's quite plain,' I said afterwards to Bertie, 'that Dr. Brown does not know much about the sea. He may be very clever on land, and he'd better keep there.'

'Well,' said Bertie, 'he's been to India, you know.'

'Oh, depend upon it he went overland. Lots of people go by the overland route.'

Bertie looked again at the map.

'I suppose they go cutting along, through Austria and Turkey, and along by the Black Sea and Persia?'

'What's that, Tom?' my mother asked, looking up from her work.

'It's the way people go to India, overland, mother. I suppose when people are afraid of sea-sickness they go that way.'

Mother laughed.

'Plenty of chances to be sea-sick going to India, Tom, even overland; for they only go as far as Brindisi by land, and there is a good deal of Mediterranean, and Red Sea, and Indian Ocean, to show what sort of sailors they are.'

So Dr. Brown was not so inexperienced as I thought, and I accounted to myself for what he had said about sea-sickness by thinking that doctors are so used to fussing and coddling that they are next door to old women themselves; and I dare say he was sea-sick himself, and likes to think every one else was as bad.

Mother was still mending winter socks; but they were no longer painfully suggestive of school; for a portmanteau has a different look, somehow, when it is being packed for a sea-voyage. We had a great discussion over what it would be necessary to take. I thought it was no use putting in all sorts of warm things, as it was sure to be warm in the Mediterranean; and then, too, I thought there was a great deal too many shirts and things; for it seemed quite absurd to think that one could not get anything washed on board, when there were such lots of water. I did not think it was much good either filling up any space with books, even though they were mostly stories; and the writing materials, pencils and drawing-paper, and Bertie's microscope, were not, in my opinion, likely to be of any use: for it was not likely that we should have time or inclination for anything of the sort.

'But we shall expect a letter from every port,' my mother said.

'Tom thinks,' said my father, 'that he would rather write with a marline-spike, dipped in tar, on a sail; and as for posting letters at the ports, depend upon it nothing less than a bottle thrown into the sea would satisfy him to convey his letters.'

Our straw-hats, covered with great soft puggheries, gave us great satisfaction, since we were not entitled to wear blue caps with gold bands and a dolphin in front; and I flattered myself that our navy-blue suits gave a highly nautical effect; and when father actually made me a present of a pair of old opera-glasses, with a strap to go over my shoulder, I felt the preparations were complete.

'I won't lend the glasses to you, Tom,' he said, 'for I know you would lose them, and then you and Bertie would torment yourselves with remorse: so I give them to you instead: and if they happen to come back with you, so much the better; if not, the loss is yours, and nobody else's.'

Wasn't it good of him?

CHAPTER III.

THE 24th of September came at last, and our portmanteau was ready strapped up in the hall, and we had been out a dozen times, at least, to see if the direction, 'Carter, passenger to Glasgow,' was all rightly tied on, and the words distinct enough.

We were to go down by the night mail, and the idea of travelling all night was in itself delightful, and a good beginning to our adventures; and we were to go from King's Cross at half-past nine, just about the time when we generally went to bed.

We were to go this way because father knew something of the guard who was going with the train, and he would look after us as far as Edinburgh; which was a comfort to mother, though I did not think that we required looking after.

The day seemed very long, and when at last we were in the cab I thought the man was letting the horse walk all the way; and was in an agony watching the clocks in the bakers' shops and public-houses that we passed, and which gave such very different accounts of the time that I was almost ill with anxiety when we reached the station and found we had full twenty minutes to spare.

Father and mother both came to see us off, and we were provided with plenty of warm rugs and a basket of prog, which proved very acceptable by-and-by, when I began to remember that I had eaten no dinner to speak of.

We had the carriage all to ourselves, so we were able to settle our traps just to our liking; and the guard, a good-natured jolly-looking Scotchman, said he would take a look at us now and then, and see us into the right train at Edinburgh.

Then the doors banged, the whistle sounded. Good-byes were said again and again for the last time, with voices a little husky and eyes a little damp. 'God bless you, dears!' 'Be sure and post a card from Greenock.' 'Take care of Bertie, Tom. Take care of yourselves, both of you.' 'Good-bye, again.' 'Good-bye.' And we were off, out of the brightness and bustle of the station, getting quicker and quicker

as we passed between rows of houses with lights in the windows, and streets with rows of gas-lamps, till suddenly we seemed to shoot out into the quiet country between dusky trees and hedgerows into the darkness under the stars.

Captain Brady had written to say, the *Larry's Luck* would leave Glasgow early on the morning of Saturday, September 25th, on account of the tide, so we should not get to Glasgow in time to go on board of her there. However, the purser was to go on board at Greenock in the afternoon, and we could join there; and Larry should meet us at Glasgow, and bring us on with him. We both wondered what the 'purser' might be. 'Something to do with money,' we concluded, and also fancied he would be a short, stout man—I suppose from the word 'pursey,' that one hears sometimes.

We had an uneventful journey north, though the very fact of the journey was event enough to us. We talked a good deal, stared out of the dark windows, where we could see little except the reflexions of the lamps, ate our prog, and finally went off to sleep, and woke to find ourselves at York, and the guard opening the doors, and bidding us come out to stretch our legs, and have a cup of coffee. How queer the people looked, to be sure, with their travelling caps and hoods on, and slippers, and pale rather dirty faces, skurrying about, not thinking a bit what people think of them, or how they look, and only anxious to get their coffee and get back to their carriages! And then the great station, with half-a-dozen trains screaming and snorting, and filling the place with smoke, and the sleepy porters yawning over the luggage, altogether made up a picture quite unlike what one had seen before, and rather like a dream, with a strong background of nightmare in it. Then off again, and more sleep; and then in the cold grey dawn we passed through Berwick, looking weird and strange with the misty grey sea behind it, and then we were in Scotland. But by-and-by everything brightened, and the sun came out for a minute, and drew a broad gold band across the grey sea, and then went in again, pulling the clouds back again over his bright face, like a lazy man with the bed-clothes, but only to come out again in a few minutes stronger and brighter, till the sea was sparkling and glittering all over, and Inchkeith, at the mouth of the Forth, looked like silver. What a splendid place Edinburgh is, to be sure! Isn't it? We only wished we had had time to spare there; for we got a glimpse of Holyrood, where poor Rizzio was murdered. There was the Castle and Arthur's Seat like a great sleeping lion, and the Calton Hill, and the queer old houses, some of them ten stories high! I wonder how the people who live on the top stories ever get up all those stairs, and when they are once up there if they ever come down! We parted with our friend the guard at Edinburgh, and had a good wash too, and went on refreshed to Glasgow. The last part of the journey seemed very long; but at last Glasgow was reached—all chimneys, and smoke, and bustle; and there on the platform was Larry, looking as if he had been standing grinning there for a fortnight, on the look-out for us. He was on the step of the carriage before the train stopped, with head and shoulders through the window, shaking hands with us. Then he tried to wrench open the door, which was locked, and then he urged our getting out of the window, and not waiting for 'those lubbering porters.' Then he put up his hands to his mouth, and shouted, 'Porter, ahoy! ahoy!' at the pitch of his voice, though the porter was close by.

We were soon rattling along in a cab to the other station, and Larry was talking so fast that the words would scarcely come out, and asking questions, and not waiting for the answers, and leaning out of window to tell the cabman he was going the wrong way, and to say that if he had lost the way he could come inside, and we would drive, which proposal the man received with scorn which was beyond expression in words.

We left our luggage at the station, and went off and had a late breakfast at a very dirty temperance hotel near. Larry says temperance hotels are generally dirty, because they use all the water for drinking, and so have none for other purposes.

We were on our way to the station when Larry exclaimed, 'Hullo! there's the purser!' and dashed across the street to a slight young fellow with dark eyebrows and a pale face, very different from our idea of a purser. 'He's not ready to come by this train,' Larry said, when he came back to us; 'but we may as well go on and find our way to the *Larry's Luck*, for the captain will be on the look-out for us, and he'll think you haven't come.' So we went on, getting glimpses now and then as we went of the Clyde and its shores and distant hills, one of which Larry said was Ben Lomond. We were soon at Greenock, and made our way straight down to the quay to look out for the *Larry's Luck*. There were several steamers in sight, but neither of them the one we wanted. 'She has a white funnel,' said Larry. 'That one? why, Tom, the *Larry's Luck* is twice as big as that; that's only a little Clyde steamer. That? no; that's a great ocean-steamer bound for New York: she's a clipper. I went over her yesterday; she's one of the Dolphin boats, and ever so much larger than ours.' So I pointed out two others, though they looked all much the same size to me. We heard that the *Larry's Luck* was down in Gourock Bay, and that the *Purrull of the Clyde* was acting tender to her. A very odd name I thought to myself, and I wondered what a tender was, for I thought that the tender of an engine was the place behind, where the coals were kept; but my doubts were soon cleared up by a little steam-tug coming up to the quay with *Pearl of the Clyde* on her bows, and 'acting tender' seemed to be fetching and carrying. Larry jumped on board before she was made fast in the quay, and I was just going to follow his example, when a snuffy old man put his dirty hand on my arm and said, 'Bide a wee, laddie, or maybe you'll make a hole in the water.' However, we were soon on board of her, luggage and all, and ten minutes' steaming took us down to Gourock Bay and alongside the big steamer, with *Larry's Luck* in gold letters on her bows; the gangway was passed from the paddle-box of the *Pearl of the Clyde* to the side of the *Larry's Luck*, and there was Captain Brady, with his jolly, sunburnt face, and hearty voice, to bid us welcome.

(To be continued.)

WONDERS OF NATURE.

A DROPPING WELL.

THE water of this dropping or dripping well has the power of turning articles into stone. It is a property which water often possesses. We have seen its action in the stalactite cave; and we may see its effects in any stone-pit, where the quarrymen turn up, at every stroke of the pickaxe, curious-looking things bedded in stone, and turned to stone. These are called *fossils*. Hard as they now are, they were once soft, living creatures. They became embedded in the sand or silt, which hardened into stone, and in course of ages they have become of the same nature as their stony shroud.

At Aix, in Provence, human bodies were found, about a hundred years ago, buried in stone, which needed gunpowder to split it. These bodies stood upright, about a foot distance from each other. In some, the heads and other parts of the body were visible, and were got out whole, perfectly turned into stone; whilst others formed so much a part of the rock, that it was found impossible to separate them from the encircling stone by any tool whatever.

In like manner, a petrified tree was found in the Island of Portland, when the workmen were quarrying stone for Blackfriars Bridge. The tree had been surrounded by matter which hardened into stone, and communicated its own stony properties to the trunk and roots which it enveloped.

Petrifying springs are bubbling and trickling under the ever-restless feet of Londoners. Somewhere in the district of Whitefriars a large piece of petrified wood was found in 1763, just buried in the street. It looked like a post which had been used to keep the carts off the pavement. It was found near a water-plug, from which water was continually trickling, and this water had turned it into stone.

In Upper Egypt, a Frenchman named Lippi once met with a stone of so peculiar a shape and appearance, that his curiosity was aroused, and he broke it open. To his surprise he found he had discovered a petrified bee-hive! There were the cells, and their inmates, the once busy bees, now hard and solid; and at the bottom of many cells he found a thick black juice, very hard, and very sweet, and inflammable as resin. It was, in short, real honey. But who would have thought of finding honey in a stone?

Any material you choose to place under a dripping well will become petrified, or, at least, coated with stony matter. A piece of moss, a leaf, a bird's nest, a wig, an acorn, or such like, becomes encrusted in a little time, and presents a curious appearance. Moss especially exhibits beautifully varied petrifactions. Sometimes a luckless snail, slow travelling, has been arrested by the shower, and locked up in his stony prison.

One of the most notable dropping wells in this country is just outside the town of Knaresborough, in Yorkshire. It is situated in a picturesque glade, and the water, which trickles over a rock into a natural basin, has great petrifying power.

In hard marble are often found marine bodies only half petrified, changed into stalactites, but not of equal hardness with the matrix in which they are contained. This renders that marble less strong, and not so able to resist the action of the air. The whitest marble is considered the best, because it contains the fewest remains of extinct animals.

It would be unfortunate for a sculptor, if he were shaping some great man's nose, to light upon a half-petrified *phacite* or *elicite*. A few rude English winters would leave the marble hero without a nose.

G. S. O.

THE HIGH, HIGH SWING.

NOW listen while I tell you a very funny thing,
That once befell a little boy who had a splendid swing;
A dreadful, dreadful, little boy, who dearly loved a riot,
And hated nothing on the earth so much as sitting quiet.

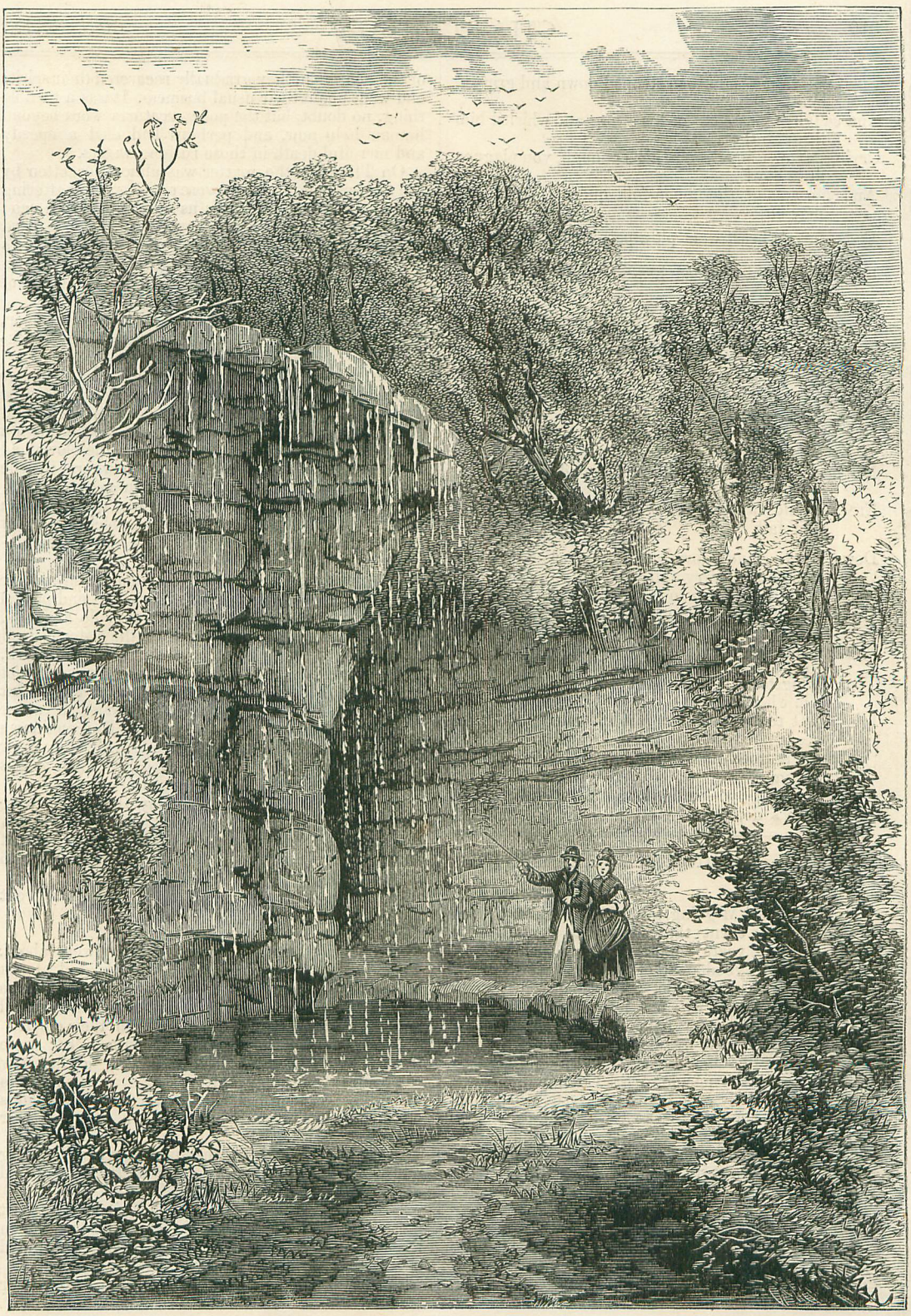
The swing of which I'm speaking hung between two high old trees,
And this boy, whose name was Harry—a naughty little tease—
Had a very tall, strong brother, who used to swing him high,
Up, up, and up, and higher up, till he seemed to touch the sky.

And yet that dreadful Harry was never quite content,
Although his brother swung him till his very breath was spent:
It was always 'Oh, please send me just a little, little higher,
I long so much to see the sky a little little nigher.'

Now guess who looked and listened one wintry afternoon,
And chuckled to himself and grinned? The Old Man of the Moon!
Daylight had almost darkened, the stars were passing through the trees,
And all but very naughty boys had gone home to their teas.

A wild wind swept the garden-walks, the withered leaves whirled by,
The branches of the old trees creaked; and, though they scarce knew why,
The boys both felt a little queer and stared up at the moon,
And wished the pleasant daylight had not died away so soon.

'Just one swing more, then we'll run home!' our rascal Harry cried,
'One high, high swing!' With all his might his big, strong brother tried
To send him up, and up, and up, far as the sailing clouds,
While the little twinkling stars came out and stared at him in crowds.



Dropping Well, in Derbyshire.

The Old Man in the Moon stooped down and gripped
him by the hair,
And caught him up out of his swing and whirled him
through the air;
Crying, 'Now I hope you're high enough, you plaguey
little boy!
And life among the moon-folk queer I hope you
may enjoy.'

Poor Harry's heart went pit-a-pat, his brain was in a
whirl;
He almost cried—indeed he did!—just like a baby
girl;
He begged the Moon Man to let go, and promised
nevermore
To be caught so high up in the air where he'd no
right to soar.

'At last then you are high enough?' the teasing Old
Man said.
'Oh quite, quite, quite!' poor Harry cried; 'please
let me home to bed;
My head is running round and round, I don't feel
well at all!'
Ere he could say another word the Moon Man let
him fall.

Down, down, and down, and farther down, the
trembling Harry fell.
But oh, how glad I am to say, no accident befell!
He got to earth quite safe and sound, and scampered
home like mad,
Vowing that ne'er again he'd be so wild a little lad.

Then youngsters all, both great and small, this fabled
tale who read,
I beg that to its warning you will every one take
heed;
'Enough's as good as a feast,' be sure, in every kind
of fun.
And now good-bye—I'll say no more—my funny
story's done. M. P.

MONSIEUR ROBINOT'S MINE.

I AM going to tell you the story of an event that happened perhaps fifty years ago, and though there is a good deal of suffering and sorrow in the tale, I think you will like to hear it, since it is a record of 'very present help in time of trouble,' given by man to man.

One February morning long ago the people of St. Etienne in France were sitting quietly over their breakfasts, when messengers came running to the town with pale faces and frightened eyes. 'The waters have broken into Monsieur Robinot's coal-mine!' they exclaimed; 'there were twenty-six men in it, only ten have escaped.'

Sixteen poor creatures then must have been overtaken by those cruel waters, and either drowned or suffocated. People looked very sad that Tuesday morning, but when they heard that engineers had gone to the mine and searched in vain for the bodies of the poor men, they gradually recovered their spirits and went about their usual business. It was a terrible thing, no doubt, but the poor creatures were beyond human help now, and perhaps had died a speedy and merciful death in those rushing waters.

On Thursday the matter was almost forgotten by the townspeople, and they were smiling and chattering over their daily occupations as only Frenchmen can; when a new rumour hushed every thought and word that was not connected with Monsieur Robinot's mine at Bois-monzil. A message had come to the mayor of the town; a message from the depths of the earth.

The engineers had sent word: 'Lend us help, some of the miners are alive; we hear them knocking.'

Yes, when all hope was over, when the engineers had explored in every possible direction, cleared away rubbish, and searched all galleries they could reach, as a last experiment they had knocked with a pick-axe on the roof of the mine, and the blows had been answered from within. Somewhere in the darkness and gloom some poor creatures yet existed.

But how to reach them? That was the question: how to get rid of the muddy waters which filled that part of the mine where doubtless they were imprisoned?

The pumps did a little, but not enough; so another plan was adopted: people stood in a line and passed buckets from one to another, like they do at a fire, only this time it was to get rid of the water instead of to bring it in. But this was terribly tiring work, since down in a coal-mine the workers could not stand upright, and a little exertion made them faint and exhausted; standing to their waist in water and breathing bad air the while. The engineers were grieved at the small progress made; the poor prisoners would die before help reached them at this rate, so they sent that message to the mayor.

At midnight on that Thursday the drums were beaten in the town, and the good citizens rose from their beds and made for the Town Hall. They thought it was some great fire which they were wanted to put out.

When they heard what it really was they went home quietly and quickly.

And never offered to help, do you say?

Wait a minute, they knew what they were about. They belonged to the Garde Nationale, and almost before they were missed they were back again, three or four hundred, all clad in their proper uniform, all ready for instant action at a word from their chief.

Now indeed the work went on with speed; these fresh, untired helpers formed a long chain; new companies relieving each other every two hours while the rest held lights, and obeyed the commands of the engineers conveyed to them through their officers.

More help too arrived, workmen from neighbouring mines flocked in great numbers to Bois-monzil, all asking to be made of use.

The poor weeping wives at the pit-mouth must have hushed their sobs as the crowd of brave men thickened, and rich citizens and poor colliers strained every nerve in the effort to rescue their dear ones.

On Saturday the chain of buckets was no longer

needed, new pumps had been got to work, and the water was rapidly being got under. That day there was a cry raised, 'They are saved! we have found them!' And the crowd danced and sang for joy, and horsemen dashed from the mine to the town to spread the joyful news.

But, alas! they were rejoicing too soon.

It was only the dead bodies of two poor miners which had been found, who between them had eleven little children crying for them at home.

Still, however, the band of workers would not lose heart: fresh difficulties cropped up, tools broke, rocks barred the way, more water trickled in, and roused fears of another flood, and opinions differed as to whether they were really working in the right direction; but one circumstance kept all to their posts, the feeble yet frequent signals from within the dark prison.

But Saturday passed and Sunday dawned, and yet they seemed no nearer success. Men's hearts grew faint, the very bravest stayed awhile to sigh and say, 'Will any be alive when we reach them?'

The good pastor never ceased walking up and down amidst the mourners and workers, cheering and encouraging. Doctors left their richer patients to cluster round the pit-mouth, with remedies all prepared to suit the wants of famished and exhausted sufferers; and the town of St. Etienne, as one man, came forth to help in this terrible need.

And still the work went on.

Monday morning came—six days from the time of the accident. Among the workers was the father of one of the poor fellows who had disappeared in the mine; he had toiled day and night to succour his boy, often calling him by name, in tones of anguish that pierced the hearts of the bystanders.

On this morning he was striking vigorous blows with his pickaxe, when suddenly the instrument was laid hold of from within.

The lost were found at last!

A communication was opened with the eight poor creatures who yet survived, and the poor father had the grief of hearing that his son was not amongst them; he had been drowned.

Sixteen feet of solid rock yet lay between the workers and their prisoners; but now, cheered by the certainty of success, the workers redoubled their efforts.

Soup and broth were passed in (through tin tubes prepared carefully days before) to the sufferers; but this was not their first desire. 'Give us light!' they feebly asked.

So they conveyed it to the mine in a tinder-box, but the bad air in the gallery prevented them using it.

More food was then given to them; but sick, with hope deferred, the poor things only begged that their friends would try to release them as quickly as possible.

They grew rapidly more feeble that last day of darkness, and towards six in the evening a pitiful little wail of 'Brothers, make haste!' wrung every heart.

Do what the brave toilers would, it was yet four hours before a passage was opened into the dismal prison, and seven wasted, ghost-like creatures, supported by the engineers, crept slowly out into the daylight. Only one had to be carried forth, an old man whose strength had failed him early.

A shout of joy arose when the news reached the pit-mouth of their rescue; but when these feeble men passed through the lines of workmen, National Guard, and citizens, drawn up near the mine, there was solemn silence; the crowd bowed their heads as a sort of respect and honour to their sufferings.

So was effected the deliverance of the miners of Bois-monzil; during the whole period of their imprisonment in the mine, business had been suspended in the town of St. Etienne, and the citizens with one mind and one desire had devoted themselves to saving their lives.

There is not much more to be told, but a few words from the lips of one of the sufferers may be interesting.

Said Claude Fereol, working miner, 'When we saw the flood rush by us we gave ourselves up for lost; we fell on our knees imploring deliverance of God, and asking pardon for our sins. We parted our clothes in equal portions, since the cold and damp affected us greatly. We had a little bread and wine the first day, which we equally divided, save that I and another man would have none of it, since we had breakfasted that day and the rest had not. We felt little hunger all the time, only Brun, the youngest of us, said he felt an appetite on the second day, and ate the leather of his braces; and another ate part of his shirt and two oil-soaked wicks of a lamp. The time did not seem very long, what with praying, and hoping, and striking the rock. As to sleep there was very little of that to be had; but we lay together in heaps, the coldest inside, to keep ourselves warm if possible. Do you ask if we disputed among ourselves? Nay, there was perfect accord; we hoped together, despaired together, and rejoiced together.

'The sounds of working from without cheered us, and we tried to guide our deliverers by tapping too, whenever they seemed to bore in a wrong direction. I heard the instrument which first penetrated the rock, and I hastened to lay hold of it, all my companions throwing themselves on their knees to thank God for our approaching deliverance, excepting the old man, who was too ill. We gave him a little soup, but he asked for snuff, after which he had longed during the whole time of our imprisonment; a little was soon conveyed to him through the opening. I remember Monsieur le Préfet speaking to me through the hole; it pleased us all greatly to think so many and such great people should be interested in us; and when we were delivered and saw the assembled crowds, and the Garde Nationale under arms, our hearts beat with joy and gratitude towards the brave men who had snatched us from the jaws of death.'

So spake one of the long-suffering prisoners of the mine to those who questioned him on what had occurred when the miners understood their forlorn condition.

Eight were rescued, but eight were lost, owing chiefly to the carelessness of the foreman, who was amongst those who perished, and who failed to take the usual precautions on the first rumour of water flowing into the mine. H. A. F.

Assisting the old man out of the mine.

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Chatterbox.

Larry showing Tom and Bertie over the ship.

'ALL'S WELL!'

(*Continued from page* 307.)

CHAPTER IV.

EVERYTHING seemed so new and delightful to Bertie and me that first evening on the *Larry's Luck!* I suppose we were more ignorant than many boys of sea matters, but this only made our interest more intense. Captain Brady took us into the saloon and showed us our cabins, and called the stewardess, and told her to make us snug. She was a pleasant-looking young Irish widow, who was always smiling and good-natured, and as fond of spinning a yarn as any old sailor in the crew, and with a store of experience to draw from, some of it very sad; but there was always a smile lurking behind the tears in those Irish blue eyes. She took to Bertie at once, of course; people always do, especially women, and there were no other passengers to take up her attention; and I think she had a liking for me, too. We were to have a cabin each, as there was plenty of room to spare, though there were two berths in each cabin, one above the other, looking more like shelves than beds; but it must be difficult for two people to dress at the same time in one of those cabins, for there is not much more than enough room there for two people to stand, and in rough weather it would be like shaking together in a sack. Bertie's cabin was just opposite mine, and he had Captain Brady for next-door neighbour, and I had Larry. When we had settled our belongings we went into the saloon and wrote a note home, to tell them of our being all right so far, to be sent on shore when the *Pearl of the Clyde* brought the purser, for we were only waiting for him; the engines were getting up steam, and the blue-peter was flying from the mainmast, a sign that the ship was just going to start. We had not long to wait, for just as I closed the envelope—the steward ran in to fetch the letter, saying the purser had come and the tug was just off again. The next minute the screw began to turn and we were off. On deck everything was in a state of confusion; the decks were dirty with coal-dust, and the sailors were coiling up great cables, and there were ropes in all directions to trip you up if you did not keep your eyes sharp about you.

'Oh!' said Larry, 'you wait till to-morrow, when the decks have been washed down and everything is taut, and she'll look quite another ship. Hullo! that's for tea: come on!'

A great bell rang, and we went down into the saloon, which was a good big room, with two long tables. There were racks hanging from the ceiling to hold glasses and water-bottles, and swinging moderator lamps, that kept upright however the ship moved. The captain sat at the end of the table, with Bertie and me on either side of him, and Larry next Bertie. The first mate, a jolly stout man, Mr. Ray, sat at the other end, with the second mate and purser, and the third mate came in later, when Mr. Ray went up to take his place on the bridge. The engineers had a mess to themselves near the engine-room (*mess* always seems such a horrid word, as if they took their food out of a basin and made a noise like pigs over it). The sailors had their meals in the forecastle.

The captain was full of fun, telling all sorts of stories of his adventures; and as he had been all over the world, and had been shipwrecked twice and had mutiny on board once, had had hairbreadth escapes of his life, had fought with Chinese pirates, pursued slavers, outwitted smugglers, been blocked with icebergs, lost in fogs, had desperate encounters with white bears, sharks, and savages, had been stabbed, shot at, burnt, drowned, frozen, and scalped, all more or less; there was plenty of material to go upon, and Bertie and I were never tired of listening.

The first mate vexed me by asking if I began to feel the motion of the ship, and he thought I was looking rather pale, and had not much appetite; which was a horrid libel, as I tucked into the beefsteaks liked anything, though there was a cockroach in my helping. I said I did not notice there was any motion, at which he shut up his chinks of eyes, and said,—

'Some folks were first-rate sailors on the Clyde.'

I was beginning to get rather hot and red in the face, when Larry gave me a nudge and whispered,—

'Hold hard, Tom! don't whistle before you're out of the wood! I was jolly sick myself the first voyage, and I've no doubt old Ray was, too; though, I guess, if you asked him he'd have a pain in his memory and forget it. We'll pay him out, never fear!'

It was getting dark when we got on deck, and we could only see the hilly shores dimly as we steamed along. Larry took us up into the deck-cabin, where the captain keeps the charts and things; and we peeped into the engine-room, where there was a glow, and a movement, and bare-armed, dirty-faced men, and great, shining, steel elbows hard at work. We went and looked at the compass, with the bright light on it, and into the wheel-house, where the steersman stood, with his hand on the great wheel. We learnt that there were four quarter-masters, who steered by turns; that a 'watch' was four hours long; that two quarter-masters were on watch together, and that they had two hours at the wheel; that the bell was struck every half-hour through the watch, so that eight bells was at four, eight, and twelve; and that at those hours the watch changed; that the mates took a watch a-piece, four hours at a time, except the 'dog-watch,' which was from four to six, and from six to eight in the evening, which was cut in half so that the same mate should not have the same night-watch every time; that the sailors and engineers were all divided into watches, like the mates and quarter-masters. Larry was a sort of extra mate, and had his watch with the first mate. We learnt, too, which was starboard and which was port, and that the red light was always at the port side and the green light at the starboard in the night-time.

It was the second mate's watch, and he was on the bridge, and we heard the steering-orders given—'Steady!' taken up by the quarter-master on the look-out—'Steady!'—and passed to the steersman, who echoed 'Steady!' or perhaps it was 'Hard a-port!' taken up 'Hard a-port!' passed on, and echoed 'Hard a-port!'

We heard eight bells struck on the quarter-deck, and directly afterwards eight bells on the forecastle; and then the quarter-master gave the long-drawn-out call we grew so used to afterwards, in his strong, deep voice, 'All's well!' and then again from the forecastle, 'All's well!'

Soon after eight bells we went down, and very soon after turned in; for, in spite of all the novelty and interest of everything, I was nearly yawning my head off with sleepiness; and as for Bertie, he went off sound asleep in the saloon, and I had quite to shake him to make him wake up and come to bed.

The stewardess came to see if we were comfortable, and had got all we wanted out of the portmanteau; and she told us that all the lights were put out at half-past ten, and then she wished us good night and pleasant dreams and left us.

The lights were lamps in the corner of the cabin—one lamp to two cabins; so Larry and I had the same lamp, and they were locked in to prevent all danger of fire. Bertie and I left our doors a little open to exchange experiences, and we laughed so much that it drove away some of our sleepiness. Bertie had chosen the lower berth in his cabin, and I the upper berth in mine; but we both found it a difficult matter to get in. Bertie tried head foremost and then feet foremost, and knocked his head and grazed his shins in the attempt; at last he decided that the best way was to sit upon the edge and draw in your head first and then your feet, like a snail.

'I'm all right now, Tom!' he called out, 'and it's no end of comfortable when you're in; but I hope I shan't forget where I am in the night and jump up, or I shall brain myself as sure as anything.'

'Oh, you should have taken the upper berth, it's so much higher!' I said, with a feeling of superior wisdom. I climbed up resolutely, and got in all right, but, unfortunately, I found my head where my feet should have been; and though my berth was higher than Bertie's it would not allow of my turning. So I had to climb down again; and when I was up again, right way up, all the bedclothes were underneath me, and in trying to pull them out they all fell on to the floor, and I had to make a second descent to pick them up. However, at last I was all right and comfortable, and I called out 'Good night' to Bertie, who was asleep already, for I got no answer, and I was soon asleep myself; and the last sounds I was conscious of were the steps on the deck above me and the call, 'All's well!'

CHAPTER V.

Swish—swish—clatter—clatter—bump! Whatever was it? Something between the chimney-sweeps and a hail-storm! It seemed to have gone on for hours before I opened my eyes, and found that it was quite dark, and I was wide enough awake to remember where I was. I did not need to open my eyes to do that, for no bed on earth ever behaved in such a lively manner, making one think of the rhyme that mother used to say to Edie when she tossed her:—

'Here we go up, up, up;
And here we go down, down, down;
And here we go backwards and forwards;
And here we go round, round, round.'

First, one's head went up; then one's feet; then there was a roll to one side, which threw one right on to the side of the berth; then a roll to the other side, which would have sent one flying out, if one had not clung on with all one's might. I think the worst is when one has gone up, up, up; and then the ship seems to stop and hesitate for a moment, and tremble and creak all over, before it begins going down, down, down. And then there's the screw. Oh, dear! it seemed as if that screw were turning round inside me! Just then I heard a tap near my head, and Larry's voice in his cabin,—

'I say, Tom, are you asleep?'

I made no answer, and presently he called again,—

'Hullo, Tom! they're swilling down the decks, and I'm going up to have a bath from the hose. Will you come, too?'

I was just going to call out that I'd come, and ask him to wait a minute, while I groped my way out of my berth, when the ship gave a more severe roll than before, and made me feel very——well, lazy and unwilling to move. So I said nothing, and Larry thought I was still asleep, for I heard him say, 'Sound as a top!' and then tumble out of his berth and out of his cabin, while I lay still—at least as still as the ship would let me—and told myself that I would go up and have a bath another day; only this morning I was too sleepy, and I would have a nap if that horrid screw would let me.

By-and-by it began to grow light, and the round port-hole grew grey with the morning light, except when a big wave washed up and made green darkness. I sat up as well as I could to take a look out, and then it was no use pretending any longer: it was not sleepiness and it was not laziness—it was just simply that I was very sea-sick; and if you have ever been to sea you'll know what that means, and if you have not, it's no use trying to describe it.

At eight bells the first breakfast-bell rang, and Larry came in, looking as fresh as a daisy after his bath.

'Hullo! are you still asleep? Why, you are a good one to sleep, and no mistake! Now, then, tumble up! I looked into the galley to see what was threatening for breakfast, and the cook told me in confidence that he shouldn't be surprised if there was collops. Oh, prime!' said Larry, smacking his lips.

'Don't!' I groaned; 'don't!'

'Oh, that's the way the cat jumps, is it?' said Larry, cheerfully. 'And no wonder, neither! It's been blowing a regular gale all night. Equinoctial, or something funny like that. A head-wind, too, worse luck to it! It's enough to make any one sick. Why, I feel a bit qualmish myself, now I come to think of it; and as for the steward's boy and the captain's boy, it's awful to look at them, poor beggars! It's just what happens to every one at first, and some sailors are bad every voyage for the first day. I shouldn't wonder a bit if there was a lot of them in the forecastle as sick as they can be. But it's soon over, and does you a power of good. I don't call you a bad sailor at all. Any one would be sick in such a nasty sea as this, till they've found their sea-legs.'

(To be continued.)

DAISY CHAINS.

ARCHIE, and Willie, and tiny Jane,
Play in the fields where the wild flowers grow,
Weave with lithe fingers a daisy chain,
Bind it through tresses of golden glow.
Sun shining brightly—nature all gay—
Winds gently blowing—Spring's gladdest day!

Sweeps swiftly onward the cloud-circled storm,
Flashes the dread lightning's death-bearing streak,
Pitiless! spares not the fair infant form,
Blanches the life-bloom on round ruddy cheek.
Limbs stark and stiffening! cold, marble brow.
Archie and Willie are sisterless now!

Archie and Willie, hand clasped in hand,
Gaze on a loved sister's fresh-opened grave;
Stream forth sweet whispers from far Heavenland—
'Jesus has called back the spirit He gave:
Place on the coffin of tiny Jane
One little, simple, daisy chain.'—HENRY WARBURTON.

A CAT NURSING CHICKENS.

THE last story that I told the children of a cat, though curious, was scarcely wonderful; the instinct of motherhood is so strong in many animals, that it is no uncommon thing to see a mother of one species suckling the young of another. But the account of a cat I am now going to give, though perfectly true, sounds almost incredible, for Pussy was acting against his natural instincts, and, as far as we can judge, was moved by pure kindness and compassion only. My new neighbours the A.'s are very fond of pets, and as they have plenty of space they can indulge their love for animals as much as they please. Some time since, among all their favourites the most popular was a handsome tom-cat, called Johnny, a tabby, large, well marked, with long silken fur and a fine bushy tail, which he was in the habit of carrying erect and flourishing when well pleased. Johnny was very social; so fond of being with his

friends that he followed them about in the garden or field like a faithful dog. If they went for a stroll by moonlight, Johnny was always one of the party. Like many other animals he seemed to know when it was Sunday, and he did not then attempt to leave the premises with the family, but when they returned from morning service at church he was always waiting at the lodge-gate to welcome them home. Of course there was a great talking, and stroking, and shaking of paws, after which Johnny led the way to the house in a state of great excitement, flourishing his tail, and showing his delight to the best of his power.

At the time of which I am writing there came a very cold season, despite which a perverse hen chose to hatch a brood of chickens. Left in the hen-house or stable-yard they certainly must have perished from the cold, so the hen and her chickens were brought into the warm kitchen; but either the hen disliked the number of people coming and going, or the large kitchen-fire was disagreeable to her, at any rate she deserted her children, and could not be induced to take any care of them. Mrs. A. was in great trouble for the tender little things, and had made up her mind that they must die. Imagine her surprise when on going to look after them she found Johnny curled round by the kitchen fire, and all the chickens nestling between his legs in his long soft fur; they chirping and happy, he purring and well pleased at his own good deed. How he persuaded them to come to him and trust in him we cannot tell, but from that time Johnny was their fond and faithful nurse: his patience and devotion never flagged, and though his adopted children took unbounded liberties with him, he never resented it. He had a curious habit of sleeping with his tongue lolling out. I suppose the chickens thought it was a piece of meat, for they pecked at it without mercy till poor Johnny learnt to take better care of it. When his dinner was brought the chickens helped themselves, ran over his plate, scampered off with the nice bits, while two or three would peck the meat from his bone. Johnny waited patiently till they were satisfied. When his milk was brought to him the chickens, who had learned to like it, surrounded the saucer, while poor Johnny stood back looking at his mistress rather wistfully, as much as to say, 'Can I bear this?' But his unselfish kindness never failed.

Now if I were making this story, it should have the pretty and proper ending. The chickens should have grown up into respectable cocks and hens, and should be showing all affection and duty to their good foster-father to this day. Alas! in real life things do not always go on so pleasantly. No doubt many of my little readers keep birds, and if so, they know that sand is necessary for them, not merely for cleanliness' sake, but for their digestion. Birds eat a great quantity of sand, lime, or grit, in some shape or other, and without it they cannot thrive. For these house-bred chickens the sand was unfortunately forgotten; they followed their instinct to be always pecking, but took to the carpet that made Johnny's bed: they swallowed quantities of the woolly fluff, but this was not found out till too late. Probably, too, the great heat disagreed with them, yet they had grown to a fair size, and might have been turned into the yard with the other fowls, to take care of themselves, if the weather had been warm: but it was very cold, and, in spite of Johnny's tenderness and care, the chickens whom he had nursed so well through their infancy died off rather rapidly in their early youth. Worse than all, soon after their death, one day Johnny disappeared. No alarm was taken, though cats had great enemies in our neighbourhood from market-gardeners and the owner of a brick-kiln not far off; but Johnny had always taken care of himself hitherto, and was no great rover. Still day after day passed, and he did not return. Every inquiry and a vigorous search were made in vain. Alas! to this day Johnny has not been heard of, and all hope that he will return has long since been given up. A*.

THE CRAB AND THE TORTOISE.

A CRAB of a roving disposition had wandered to the upper margin of the beach, to see what he could see. Very much to his surprise he descried a creature jogging languidly seaward as if to meet him, and concluding from the general resemblance of the stranger to himself, that they were somehow related, he ventured to accost him by the name of *cousin*.

C. 'You must have travelled a great distance, my good cousin,' said he.

T. 'Only half-an-hour's journey, Mr. Crab—no great distance,' was the reply of the tortoise, delivered in a low and quiet voice.

C. 'You have the advantage of me; pray, may I ask your name?'

T. 'Men call me "Tortoise," but for what reason I do not know.'

C. 'You are right welcome, Mr. Tortoise. We are so seldom favoured from the land. May I venture to inquire what brings you here?'

T. 'Three things: a slight indisposition, a draught of sea-water, and—my own feet.'

C. 'Feet? I do not quite understand you. What a hard fighter you must have been in your day!'

T. 'Why think you so?'

C. 'You seem to have lost so many of your legs; and those left you are so out of proportion to your bulk, I conclude they have each lost a joint at least.'

T. 'Not at all, I do assure you; on the other hand, I was just wondering what use you could have with so many.'

C. Why, you shall see.'

And the crab immediately began to run backwards and forwards in a north-easterly and south-westerly manner to the great amusement of the tortoise.

'And look!' continued he, growing quite vain of his fancied superiority, 'you may perceive from the print of the crown upon my back that I am a royal creature.'

T. 'Wonderful!' exclaimed the tortoise.

C. 'Indeed,' said the crab, 'I begin to pity you more than ever. How, in the name of wonder, do you convey food to your mouth?'

T. 'Why, my good friend,' replied the tortoise, 'I convey my mouth to my food,—that's how I manage. I suppose, Mr. Crab,' continued the tortoise, 'you are a weaver by occupation?'

C. 'What strange ideas you land-people have!'

T. 'Why, we have an animal with us with legs, as you call them, just like yours, which makes its living by weaving.'

C. 'A very useful employment too, you must admit, Mr. Tortoise.'

T. 'Very useful to itself, Mr. Crab!'

The crab had unconsciously omitted to call the tortoise his cousin for some time, and was beginning to feel that he was in different company from what he had anticipated.

But at this point of the conversation a stone thrown by a wicked youth glanced harmlessly from the horny armour of the tortoise, and alighting on the crab's back, cracked his crown. All his legs were now in motion, and, without bidding good-bye to his new acquaintance, he posted with amazing celerity seawards till he reached a cranny of the rocks, in which he hid himself.

The tortoise drawing in his head merely remarked to himself, 'How useful a thing it was to be able to run fast!' J. C.

DR. ISAAC BARROW.

IN the time of Charles II., and previously, candidates for Holy Orders were expected to answer in Latin to the various questions put to them by the bishop or his examining chaplain. The following is related of the celebrated Dr. Isaac Barrow, who was tutor to the immortal Newton:—

When Barrow was about to take his bachelor's degree he presented himself before the bishop's chaplain, who said to Barrow, '*Quid est fides?*' (What is faith?)

'*Quod non vides*' (What thou dost not see), answered Barrow, in a moment.

The chaplain, a little vexed at Barrow's laconic answer, continued: '*Quid est spes?*' (What is hope?)

'*Magna res*' (a great thing), replied the young candidate quickly.

'*Quid est charitas?*' (What is charity?) was the next question.

'*Magna raritas*' (A great rarity), was Barrow's prompt reply. The examiner went to the bishop and told him that a young Cantab had thought proper to give rhyming answers to three several moral questions, and he added that he believed his name was Barrow, of Trinity College, Cambridge.

'Barrow! Barrow!' said the bishop, who knew the literary and moral worth of the young Cantab: 'If that's the case, ask him no more questions, for he is better qualified *to examine us than we him.*'

The candidate received his letters of orders forthwith. Barrow was afterwards appointed Professor of Greek at Cambridge, and also Lucasian Professor and Master of Trinity.

GLEANING TIME.

THE village school is empty;
The master's at the sea,
Doing upon the shingle
A sum in Rule of Three:
The slates and books are idle,
The ink is hard and dry;
There's no one left for study
But the spider and the fly.

The village street is empty,
It is no time for play;
No song, no childish laughter,
No shuttlecocks to-day:
There's no one left for leisure,
But the old, the sick, the lame;
For the son who sleeps in harvest,
Is a son that causeth shame.*

The father takes his sickle,
And hums his morning song,
The thrifty mother follows
With all her little throng;
The fields are full of gleaners,
And merry as a fair,
In such an hour of plenty
What heart can think of care?

And long ere twelve is ringing
Beneath a hedge they dine;
True hunger gives them sauces,
And mirth provides the wine:
The children boast their gleanings,
To shame their brother Joe,
Who has idled all the morning,
And now has nought to show.

And now he wants his dinner;
His crust is very dry;
For Joe no cheese nor bacon,
Nor slice of 'berry pie:'
He chews his bread in silence,
But in his heart says he—
'The shine I'll take out of them
Ere I go home to tea!'

Full sixty times a minute
He bends his weary back,
And far he leaves behind him
His virtuous brother Jack:
So when the moon is shining,
And the curfew-bell is toll'd,
His bag is like a sausage,
As full as it can hold.

He trudges home contented
Along the silent lane,
His gleanings on his shoulder,
His eye on Charles's wain;
Although the load is heavy,
His heart is light and free,
For Joe has earned distinction,
And a happy boy is he.

So every day the treasure
Grows broader, bigger, higher,
And the 'joy of harvest' deepens
Around the cottage fire;
And though he's often weary
His cares are charmed to sleep,
For the goodman's rent and fuel
Are in that well-earned heap.

G. S. OUTRAM.

* Prov. x. 5.

The Gleaners.

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Chatterbox.

The Shepherd's Dog and the Lost Boy.

THE SHEPHERD'S DOG AND THE LOST BOY.

THE valleys, or glens as they are called by the natives, which intersect the Grampian Mountains, are chiefly inhabited by shepherds. The pastures over which each flock is permitted to range extend many miles in every direction. The shepherd never has a view of his whole flock at once, except when it is collected for the purpose of sale or shearing. His occupation is to make daily visits to the different parts of his pastures in succession, and to turn back by means of his dog any stragglers that may be straying towards the boundaries of his neighbour.

In one of those excursions a shepherd happened to carry along with him one of his children, a child about four years old. This is a usual practice amongst the Highlanders, who accustom their children from the earliest infancy to endure the rigours of the climate. After traversing his pastures for some time, attended by his dog, the shepherd found himself under the necessity of ascending a summit at some distance to have a more extensive view of his range; as the ascent was too fatiguing for his child, he left him on a small plain at the bottom, with strict injunctions not to stir from it till his return. Scarcely, however, had he gained the summit when the horizon was suddenly darkened by one of those thick mists which frequently descend so rapidly amidst those mountains as almost to turn day into night.

The anxious father instantly hastened back to find his child, but owing to the unusual darkness he missed his way in the descent. After a fruitless search of many hours amongst the dangerous morasses and cataracts with which these mountains abound, he was at length overtaken by night. Still wandering on without knowing whither, he at length came to the verge of the mist, and by the light of the moon he discovered that he had reached the bottom of the valley, and was now within a short distance of his cottage. To renew the search that night was equally fruitless and dangerous. He was therefore obliged to return to his cottage, having lost both his child and his dog, which had attended him faithfully for years.

Next morning by daybreak the shepherd, accompanied by a band of his neighbours, set out again to seek his child, but after a day spent in fruitless fatigue he was at last compelled, by the approach of night, to descend from the mountain. On returning to his cottage he found that the dog which he had lost the day before had been home, and on receiving a piece of cake had instantly gone off again.

For several successive days the shepherd renewed the search for his child, and still on returning in the evening disappointed to his cottage he found that the dog had been there, and on receiving his usual allowance of cake had instantly disappeared. Struck with this singular circumstance he remained at home next day, and when the dog as usual departed with his piece of cake he resolved to follow him and find out the cause of this strange procedure.

The dog led the way to a cataract at some distance from the spot where the shepherd had left his child. The banks of the waterfall, almost joined at the top, yet separated by an abyss of immense depth, presented that abrupt appearance which so often astonishes and appals the traveller amidst the Grampian Mountains, and indicates that those stupendous chasms were not the silent work of time, but the sudden effect of some violent concussion of the earth.

Down one of these rugged and almost perpendicular descents the dog began without hesitation to make his way, and at last disappeared in a cave, the mouth of which was almost on a level with the torrent.

The shepherd with difficulty followed, but on entering the cave, great was his joy when he beheld his child eating the cake which the dog had just brought him, while the faithful animal stood by, eyeing his young charge with the utmost complacency! From the situation in which the child was found it appears he had wandered to the brink of the precipice, and either fallen or tumbled down till he reached the cave, which the dread of the torrent had afterwards prevented him from trying to quit. The dog, by means of his scent, had traced him to the spot, and afterwards prevented him from starving by giving up to him his own daily allowance! He appears never to have quitted the child by night or day, except when it was necessary to go for its food, and then he was always seen running at full speed to and from the cottage.—*Brown's Anecdotes of Dogs.*

'SIT STRAIGHT!'

HOW often do the children hear this! Fathers, mothers, teachers, aunts, uncles, all unite on this short bit of advice, 'Sit straight!'

'Oh, why?' the children sometimes ask or think, 'why should I sit straight?'

Because God made your backbone to be erect, and not curved or hunched. It is true, He formed it of several bones in order that it might be flexible, that is, easily bent, in order to suit different motions of the body; but its natural position is erect. Sit straight also in order to give your lungs room to work in. They contain two sets of cells or tubes, one set for the air, and the other for the blood, separated by a thin membrane. It is necessary for life and health that the blood through this membrane should come in contact with the air, and take from the air that part of it which is called oxygen; oxygen purifies the blood, and gives it life and freshness. Now when you stoop, you cannot take in a sufficient quantity of air to answer these purposes, and therefore the blood remains bad; and the little air-tubes squeezed together become sore and irritated. By-and-by the lungs ulcerate, and then you are likely to get sick and die.

Give the lungs room enough to pump in all the pure air they need, and you lay the foundation of a strong and sound constitution. So you see that there is good reason for the advice, 'Sit straight!'

THE CAREER OF A FRENCH CHEMIST.

NICHOLAS LOUIS VAUQUELIN, the celebrated chemist, was the son of a French peasant, and was born in 1763. It is told of him, that even when a mere child, and exhibiting in his worn, tattered raiment all the marks of poverty at home, he gave hopeful promise of that clear, bright intelligence, combined with steady industry, which, in after years, placed him in the foremost ranks of chemical investigators. It was very fortunate for him that in his juvenile days, and at the very commencement of his intellectual life, he received from his instructor that kindly recognition, and that judicious encouragement, to which even the most self-reliant are not wholly insensible; and it was to Vauquelin no small incentive to persevering industry when his teacher, whose first ambition it was to enable him to read and write, commended his diligence in some such words as the following:—

'Go on, my boy; work, study, persevere; and one day you will go as well dressed as the best man in the village.'

To a little stripling, in cold weather, shivering and ill-clad, these words had a real and intelligible meaning, and proved a powerful incentive to industry.

The choice of a profession was decided for him by an apparently accidental circumstance.

A country apothecary one day visited the school in which Vauquelin was then receiving the rudiments of a very elementary education, and being struck with the boy's manly and sturdy appearance, thought that he might be useful in wielding the pestle which ministered to the needs of the sick and ailing in his district.

With his parents' consent, Vauquelin entered upon the career which he felt sure would minister to his intellectual improvement. In this, however, he was disappointed, for it was the muscle rather than the brain of the youth that the chemist desired to press into his service; and Vauquelin soon discovered that the master whom he served refused to allow him leisure for study. The youth no sooner discovered this than he set himself to seek elsewhere an opportunity to pursue his studies. He left the employ of the country apothecary, and with his knapsack on his back set out for Paris. When he reached Paris he began a weary search for a situation as apothecary's boy, but without success. Distress and disappointment were followed by disease; and falling ill, the poor lad was taken to the hospital, where, notwithstanding the kindness with which he was at once treated, he lingered long, and at last fell into a gloomy melancholy of a very distressing kind. This, however, was only transitory, and it soon became evident that the mental and moral stuff of which the lad was made was totally different from that which allows disappointment to be followed by despair. It is true that at one time he fancied he should not recover: but he soon looked more hopefully upon his condition; his health improved, and when after some time his strength was restored, he set out with fresh energy, and again began the search for congenial employment. And again he found it with an apothecary. This time, however, he had better fortune, for he had been but a short time in his situation when he became known to the eminent chemist Fourcroy, who, detecting in the lad something more valuable than muscle, took him into his employ, and shortly afterwards made him his private secretary. Under the wise guidance of Fourcroy, in whom Vauquelin found a friend as well as a master, he was now on the high road to fame and fortune; and when Fourcroy died, such had been the industry of the apothecary's boy that he was at once promoted to the Professorship of Chemistry, a post which his master had held with much distinction. This was a position of which an able man might well be proud; but Vauquelin's success did not terminate here. In 1795 he was appointed Inspector of the School of Mines, and Professor of Chemistry at the National Institute. He was called to occupy also a corresponding position in the Faculty of Medicine at Paris; and in 1809 he was promoted to the chair of this important institution.

By dint of industry and perseverance, aided by high moral qualities, Vauquelin was now at the head of his profession; but in his own opinion, at any rate, the crowning point of his career was reached when, in 1829, he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, and re-entered, in honour and wealth, the humble village which many years before he had left poor, friendless, and unknown.

A GOOD SERVANT.

WOULDST thou a household servant be,
Three points of character I see
Needful for thriving—these the three:

Be sober, honest, and discreet,
Or no good mistress wilt thou meet;
And be in person clean and neat.

Three things avoid with special care:
Tales from your master's house to bear,
For once out they fly everywhere;

Avoid strong drink, for none can know
How fast the love of it may grow,
And then disgrace will not be slow;

Scraps give not to your friends away
Unless your mistress says you may—
Their greed will grow till it betray.

Three things in household service, too,
'Twere well that thou shouldst ably do,
Though *all* may be well done by few:

Scrub well, cook well, and well attend,
Then will thy mistress be thy friend,
And make thee happy in the end.

Scrub well the floors and make them white,
Polish the tables, shining bright,
Rub all the glasses clear as light.

A Good Servant.

With noiseless step and watchful eye,
Whate'er the guests may want supply,
Making no bustle needlessly.

Still three rules more must thou observe
If thou perfectly wouldst serve,
And praise and honour well deserve:

If you do wrong the error own,
Nothing hide that should be known,
Or conceal what should be shown.

Never let idle vanity
Tempt you your ladies' clothes to try,
Or in their drawers and cupboards pry.

Let all things in their places be,
That none need seek what all should see;
And aim at punctuality.

Such, then, as all these things can do,
We reckon servants good and true;
Pity there should be so few!

A STRANGER'S VISIT.

'OH, I am a traveller come from far,
Will you give me shelter, I pray?'

'You may step within and sit awhile
Since you come from far away.'

'Oh, give me a draught to quench my thirst,
And I'll give you a silver crown.'

'I'll give you a draught, and all for nought,
If you come from London town.'

'Now what is your liking for London town?
Good maiden, tell me, I pray.'

'Oh! I had a brother in London town,
To the wars he went away.'

'I saw thy brother in London town,
And like to me was he.'

'Oh! brother, come in, for I know thee now,
But thou lookedst strange to me.'

E. M. A. F. S.

'ALL'S WELL!'

(*Continued from page* 315.)

'YOU wait till we get a few Italian passengers on board. They're something fearful! They begin to be ill before they come in sight of the ship, and are quite pale green, and limp, and washed out when they come on board. It's enough to make one sick just to see them. Oh, it's not only the women, the men are quite as bad, if not worse. To hear them groan! It's like two hurdy-gurdys and a bagpipes in one! Why, there was one young chap, between Syracuse and Malta, one voyage, going on like an old pig with the toothache; and he called himself a soldier, too! I put up with him as long as I could, and then I just stepped across to him and said, "Now look here, my fine fellow, you shut up that noise, or I'll give you something to groan about!" He didn't understand a word of English, but he knew what I meant fast enough, and there was no more groaning. They've no pluck, those fellows, not a bit! They're all chatter and grimace, but they've no backbone. They'll come begging and praying to "*il capitano*" to put them ashore—anywhere—and they'll pay anything he likes; and the captain, he is so polite and smiling, and says he is so sorry, but there is no island marked on the chart anywhere about there, or he'd have been most happy to land them.'

I managed to screw out a smile now and then while Larry talked, though I felt more sympathy with the Italians than I liked to own.

'How's Bertie?' I asked.

'Oh, he's pretty sick, too. I've been with him this morning ever so long. But he's very plucky, and he'll soon be all right. I left him to the tender mercies of the stewardess, who will take care of him unless you want to engage her services yourself?'

'No,' I said wrathfully, 'I don't want anybody. I'm going to get up.'

'All right,' said Larry; 'the bell will go in a minute, so look sharp.'

But when I had got out of the berth, and had fallen violently against the door and cannoned off on to the washing-stand, I thought I would not attempt going in to breakfast that morning; and Larry said he would send me in a cup of tea, and come and help me into my clothes and up on deck afterwards, and I very gladly subsided into the lower berth.

The second steward, a good-natured, rather hump-backed man, called Bob, brought me in a large mug of tea and some dry toast. I could not bear to look at it, and asked him to put it down, and soon had the pleasure of seeing the tea upset itself and the toast float away with it under the berth; but I was too miserable to care.

The captain came to have a look at me after breakfast, and advised me to get up and come on deck, as the air would do me more good than anything. Larry came to help me dress, which was such a gymnastic feat that it made me laugh in spite of everything. There was not much room in my cabin for much variety of movement; it was just tumbling against the berths, or the door, or the washing-stand, or the seat. But when we got into the saloon it was most ridiculous: one aimed at the door, and found oneself looking out of the port at the other side; one turned to take up a book off the table, and found oneself hurrying off towards the pantry. The only way to get up the saloon was hand-over-hand along the backs of the seats. I took a look in at Bertie on my way, and found him very sick; so he was not going to get up, but lie still, and the stewardess was looking after him.

'I shall be all right soon, Tom,' he said; 'the stewardess says I'm not half so bad as some people, and the captain says I shall soon get over it.'

So I made my way up on deck with Larry, and found a snug place just outside the captain's deck cabin, by the funnel, out of the wind—for there was a rough, cold wind, and I was glad of some of the warm things mother had put in for us. I sat there most of the day, watching the great grey waves, and seeing in the distance a misty line which the captain said was Ireland.

I was not up to much fun, for I felt sometimes that if I turned my head I should be sick; but I got a good deal of pleasure watching the sailors at their work, and Larry or one of the mates was almost always with me to amuse me, and I was getting used to the motion of the ship, and liked to see her rise to the big waves and dip into the trough; or when a sea caught her on the side, and sent a rush of foam and water over the lower deck; or when she gave a roll, and I had to cling on, and could look almost straight down into the deep, troubled sea.

CHAPTER VI.

FOR the first three days after we left Glasgow we really had some very rough weather; it was an equinoctial gale, and a very severe one too. Indeed, we heard that there had not been such a gale in the Irish Channel for more than thirty years, and that several vessels were wrecked during those three days; that some, that started the same day that we did, had to put back to repair damages, and that even on the Clyde much mischief was done, and some of the pretty little yachts and steamers we had been looking at in Gourock Bay were blown from their moorings and driven ashore. I am rather proud of that storm, for I feel it is an excuse for my sea-sickness, and that, on the whole, I was a pretty good sailor. But I must say that Bertie and I were very glad when the wind began to go down, and the sea too, and when we found that food was not altogether so unpleasant as it had seemed lately, but that we were quite ready for dinner by two bells, and were as hungry again as possible by tea-time. We were glad, too, that we lost twenty minutes every day, for it made dinner twenty minutes sooner.

The captain used to take the meridian every day about noon, when there was a sun to take it by, walking about with a sextant, which Larry tried in vain to explain to us; but, anyhow, he found out with it when it was exactly twelve o'clock; and as we were going towards the sunrise we got our

noon every day a little earlier, and the saloon clock had to be altered about twenty minutes most days. We got, too, to think the rolling and pitching great fun; and as to the meals, they were so ridiculous in the rough weather, that I was almost sorry when the ship went on an even keel, and the steward was able to take away the cross-boards from the saloon table, which kept our plates and dishes from dashing about at their own sweet will.

You cannot think how difficult it is to eat soup when the ship is rolling; the only chance is to hold the plate and tip it gradually till at last it is nearly at right angles with the table, as the side of the ship goes down. The captain was carving a piece of beef one day, and the ship gave a lurch, and off went the dish, post-haste, down the table, and emptied the beef on to Mr. Ray's knees. How we did laugh! Such a mess of grease and gravy! and the captain said very politely, 'I'll trouble you for that beef, Mr. Ray;' as if the first mate had taken it on purpose. We could only have our cups half filled with tea, and even then one did not feel safe till it was all gone. One needed four eyes at least, and certainly eight hands: while one was holding one's plate the tea upset, and if one looked round for the mustard, the milk-jug emptied itself into one's plate, or the sugar-basin went bustling off aft.

I cannot think how they got anything cooked, and I should just like to see our cook at home in the Bay of Biscay; for she does not need a gale of wind to ruffle her temper, and she is ready to snap one's nose off if one even looks in at the kitchen-door when she is busy. But the cook in the *Larry's Luck* was a stout, jolly little man, with a paper cap and a dirty face, who did not seem put out by anything. Larry used to chaff him a good deal, but I think he found a match in him.

Mr. Ray was always teasing us about our being sea-sick, which I think was a great shame, for it was quite bad enough without being laughed at about it.

'Well, Master Tom,' he would say, 'the wind's freshening, we shan't see you at breakfast to-morrow;' or 'Feeling a bit queer, eh? Thought so by the look of you;' or 'No more beef? not much appetite in the Bay of Biscay seemingly.' And then he had a way of nodding and winking in a knowing way, or shutting his eyes and turning down the corners of his mouth, and groaning as if he were feeling very bad, which was irritating to a fearful degree. We paid him out one day at dinner though. He had to go up and take his place on the bridge, while the third mate came down, so he said to Captain Brady,—'If you'll excuse me, sir, I'll be off.'

The captain nodded, but Larry gave a meaning cough. 'You're in a hurry, Mr. Ray.'

And I caught it up at once. 'I thought you did not seem quite yourself to-day. Feel the motion, eh?' just as he said to me so often.

'I'm going on business,' he said, stiffly, for he was one of those men who are always chaffing, but who cannot bear to be chaffed in return.

Larry screamed with laughter.

'Business in the lee-scuppers, I expect,' he said; and there was a general roar of laughter, for every one knew what that meant, and the first mate retired rather red and discomfited.

When we were over our sea-sickness, and had time to look about us, we were in the Bay of Biscay, and no land in sight, only green tumbling sea all round. There were great gulls flying about, sometimes coming quite near the ship, and sometimes dipping down and swimming on the waves; and there were some little birds following the ship which were called 'Mother Carey's chickens,' and are supposed to show that a storm is coming: but they were wrong if they meant that, for we got no more storms after the first few days. I wonder if they ever get tired of flying and swimming, and long for the land, and where their nests are, and if ever they lose their way!

Then there were great shoals of porpoises; such big, lively things! some of them leaping clear out of the water, and others just showing their black back and fins and a gleam of white underneath. We looked out for whales, but did not see any, though they are to be seen sometimes in the Bay of Biscay; and we also kept a look-out for the sea-serpent, in whom Larry firmly believed, and about whom he told us all sorts of marvellous stories. Sails were rare things, and the smoke of a steamer caused quite an excitement. We used to stare through our glasses at every speck on the horizon, and sometimes the captain let us look through his field-glass. Bertie could not bear looking through the glass; he told me he could hardly ever see anything through it, and it seemed so very stupid, when the captain pointed out something not to see it, and it was such a temptation to say, 'Oh yes, to be sure, there it is!' when he really saw nothing at all. *(To be continued.)*

SAGACITY OF A FOWL.

A GENTLEMAN of Colyton, Devon, tells the following story, as showing the amount of sagacity in the common fowl.

For some time past he has had a tribe of fowls, which, instead of roosting in the house intended for them, have persisted in taking for their abode at night a fine Portugal laurel situate in his grounds. During the last few months a neighbour's hen has been in the habit of joining his fowls, and roosting with them. The neighbour, after various vain attempts to keep the hen on his own premises, at length bethought himself of tying the hen's legs with a short string, in a similar manner to that in which a horse is 'hobbled.' But the bird soon overcame this impediment, and resumed her old haunt. Shortly after her return in this 'hobbled' condition, the whole household was startled just before dusk one evening by a strange noise outside the house, and on looking to see the cause, they found the cock belonging to the above-mentioned brood of fowls walking up and down in a very excited manner, and giving utterance to a shrill noise, which more resembled a rapid succession of crows than anything else. At length they went out to him, and he fled, still screaming, towards the Portugal laurel, where, on following him, they found the poor 'hobbled' hen suspended by her string from one of the branches, and they cut her down in time to save her life. Did not this show sense in the male bird worthy of a higher name than instinct?

The Hobbled Hen suspended.

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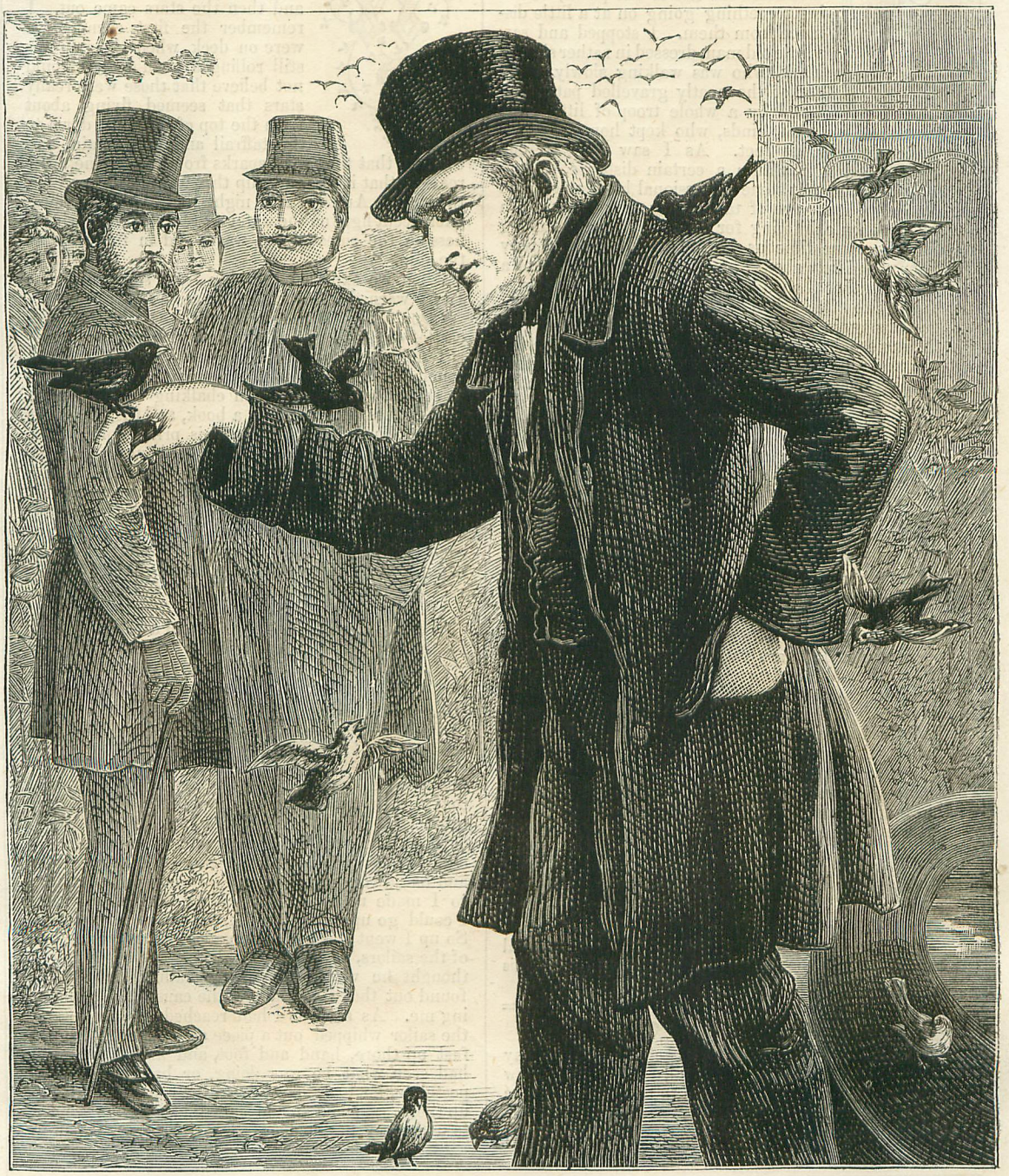
Chatterbox.



The Bird-Man of the Tuileries Gardens.

THE BIRD-MAN OF THE TUILERIES GARDENS.

LAST October, crossing the Tuileries Gardens in Paris, one afternoon, about three o'clock, I saw a number of people assembled on one of the paths, watching something going on at a little distance from them. I stopped and saw a little old man, dressed in rather shabby black, who was walking slowly along one of the neatly gravelled paths, followed by a whole troop of little birds of all kinds, who kept hopping about quite close to his feet. As I saw that no one approached him within a certain distance, I supposed that he was some professional bird-tamer, who had brought a cage of tame birds with him, which he was then exhibiting for money. After watching him for some time as he fed the birds, and they hopped and flew about him as if he were a tree or a shrub, rather than a man, I passed on: however, a day or two after I had occasion to pass through the gardens again about the same time, and there was the same old man, and the crowd of people again, and now I perceived the birds flying up to him from all directions. This old man, I learned, was quite a character in Paris, and the other day I saw the following notice of him in a newspaper:—'The old bird-man, who was supposed to have died during the siege, has, to the great joy of the dickey-birds in the Tuileries Gardens, turned up there again. He walks each morning, as of yore, round the marble basins, overcanopied with birds. He and they have hit upon a common tongue, which is neither birdy nor human. The old man orders his feathered friends to perform different evolutions. One might have supposed that in after-years a generation would have sprung up which knew nothing about him. But the descendants of the sparrows that he commanded and coaxed into obedience in 1869 are just as docile as their ancestors. When the old man has tested the patience, discipline, and intelligence of his birds, he spreads before them an abundant feast of seeds and crumbled biscuits. This bird-fancier is one of the mysteries of Paris. Nobody knows who he is or whence he comes. The old woman with the wooden legs, in all the *twenty-five* years during which she has sold cakes in the Tuileries Gardens, never saw the bird-man exchange words or a salute with any human being. He has greatly aged since he disappeared a few years ago. He has lost his light, gliding step, and hobbles painfully along to meet his feathered friends, who still, as formerly, chirp out a joyous welcome the moment they see him. Perhaps some day a band of loving redbreasts will pay funereal honours to this shadowy old gentleman, strewing his corpse with leaves.' J. F. C.

ANECDOTE OF QUIN.

WHEN Quin, the famous actor, was one day lamenting that he grew old, a pert young fellow asked him what he would give to be as young as he was? 'I would even submit,' said Quin, 'to be almost as foolish.'

'ALL'S WELL!'

(*Continued from page* 327.)

WHEN evening came, we liked to watch the sun setting in the sea in crimson, and gold, and purple; and then the stars came out. I remember the first evening we were on deck, when the ship was still rolling a good deal, I could not believe that those were really stars that seemed flying about from the top of the mast down to the taffrail and back again, and thought that they were sparks from the engine, till I realised that it was the ship that was moving and not the stars. And then at night there was the phosphorescent light on the water—great stripes of brightness on the sides of the waves and in the wake of the ship.

Then we explored the ship from stem to stern: Larry warned us about the forecastle.

'Don't you let the Jacks catch you in the forecastle, or you'll get chalked as sure as anything.'

I did not know what being 'chalked' was, but I concluded that it was the same that we often do at school, which consists in chalking 'ASS' in large plain letters backwards on a book, and then applying it to a fellow's back, so that it is printed off on him, and he often carries the mark, without knowing it, for ever so long. 'They sha'n't catch me,' I said confidently, and the very next day I was chalked.

Burns, one of the quarter-masters, saw me standing just at the bow, and came running up as hard as he could, and before I knew what he was at he had drawn a circle in chalk on the deck round me.

'Caught!' he said, out of breath, and laughing.

'Well, what now?' I asked.

'Why, sir, you're bound to stand a bottle of grog for the forecastle this evening.'

And so I did, and they drank my health, and I was free of the forecastle after that.

I did not mind this so much, for I had got plenty of pocket-money, but my first experiences in the rigging were not so pleasant. I believe that Mr. Ray was at the bottom of it, for he kept poking me up by saying that I had better keep below, and that land-lubbers did not know how to climb. Of course I could not pretend to climb like the sailors, or like Larry, who could go up to the moon if he only had a rope; but I had climbed heaps of trees, and had a very steady head that never turned giddy, so I made up my mind to show that, at any rate, I could go up to the cross-trees as easy as possible. So up I went; and after me, close behind, came one of the sailors, a young Greek. I felt angry, for I thought he was afraid of my falling, but I soon found out that this was not the cause of his following me. As soon as I had reached the cross-trees the sailor whipped out a piece of cord and tied me fast up there, hand and foot, and almost before I had seen what he was doing, or had time to expostulate, he had slipped down the ropes and left me up there. I shouted and called, but no one seemed to notice my position. I could just see the man in

the wheel-house, but he seemed quite intent on his steering, though I fancied I could see his shoulders shaking; and the other quarter-master on the watch, but he was looking out hard into the distance forward; and Mr. Ray on the bridge, but his glasses were turned in the same direction. I felt quite in a rage at first, but it was no use being angry, it only made one more ridiculous. By-and-by Larry discovered me, or pretended to discover me. 'Hullo, Tom! what are you after?'

'I say, Larry, there's a good fellow! just untie this bothering knot!'

'All right,' says Larry; 'come down, and I'll do it in a minute.'

'I can't come down, you must come up.'

And then Larry laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks, and I could not help laughing, too, in spite of myself.

'Caught again, old chap! done! regularly done! You're in for another bottle of grog to make you free of the rigging.'

'Grog?' I said. 'Oh! that's all, is it? Then I'll stand grog and welcome, if they'll just untie me.'

And there in a trice was the Greek, untying me as quickly as he could for laughing, and my health was drunk again that evening in the forecastle.

CHAPTER VII.

The first land we came in sight of was Portugal, near the mouth of the Tagus, and though we had not been at sea a week yet, land seemed quite strange. It looked rather brown, and hot, and dry, and there were fishing-boats or feluccas, as they are called, with odd-shaped sails, that made it look like a picture, and unlike England. The next day we passed Trafalgar Bay and Gibraltar. It makes one feel so proud of being English, and Larry and Bertie and I got quite excited as we recalled that most splendid sea-fight, and the signal, 'England expects every man this day to do his duty,' and the dying hero! We met another of the Dolphin boats just outside Trafalgar Bay, and it was delightful to see the quarter-master run up the Union Jack and dip it as a salute, and the other steamer reply with the same.

And then Gibraltar! I cannot think how the Spaniards can rest in their beds while it belongs to another nation: it's like the nose off one's face belonging to some one else. I wonder they allow it.

'Allow it, indeed!' said Larry. 'They can't help it! Don't they wish they may get it? They'd better "come and take it!" as the mastiff said to the puppy-dog that wanted his bone.'

'It looks very strong,' I said, gazing at the bold, steep rock, with the castle at the top and the town nestling at the foot.

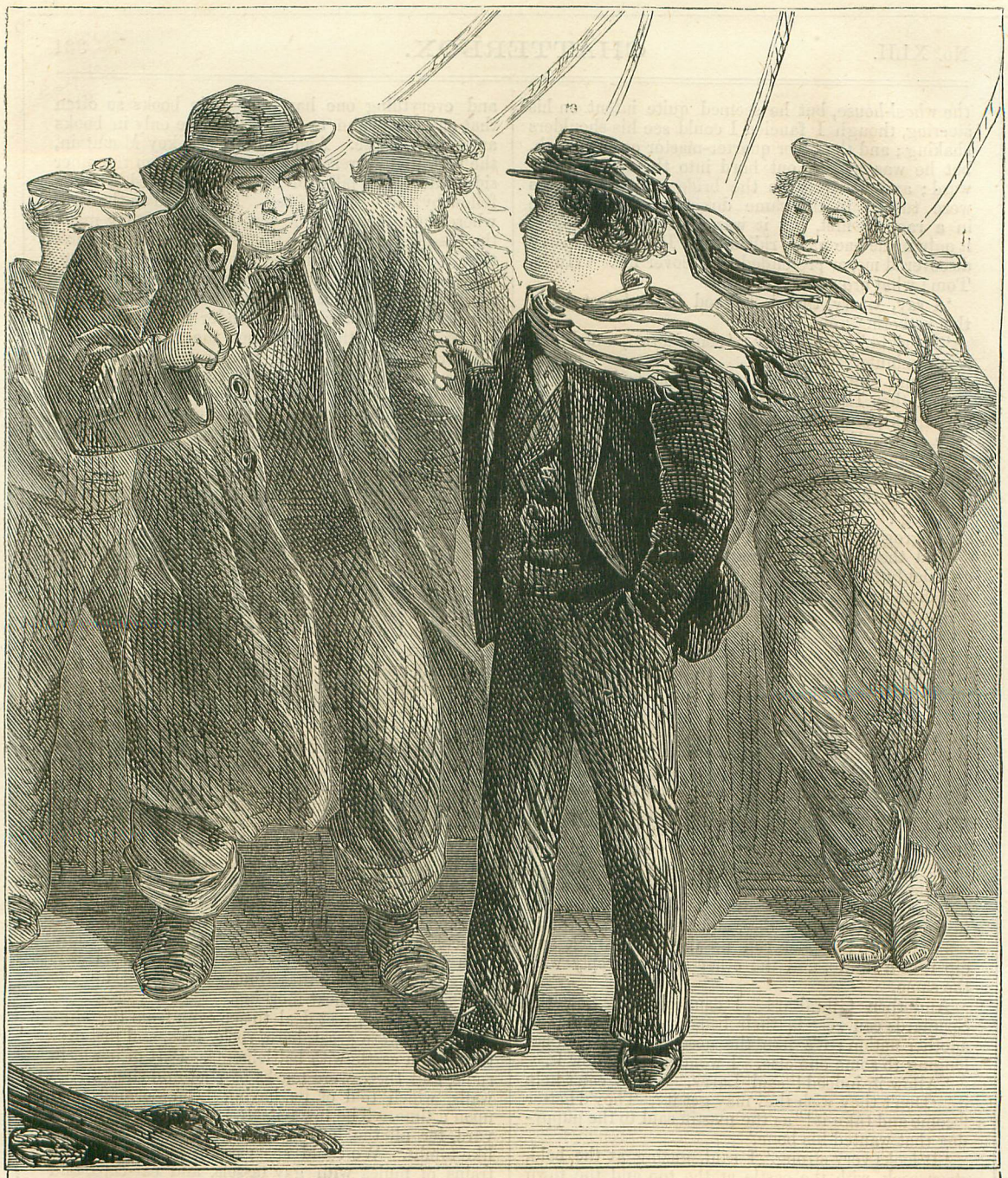
'Strong! I should rather think so! They could knock a fleet into smithereens as easy as eggs; and it's quite as strong on the land side, so an army would find it warm work crossing that bit of neutral ground. What I should do,' concluded Larry, 'if I were the Queen, would be to make all the ships salute as they go by, and send a shell into them if they didn't!'

And then on the other side was Africa, another continent, where there are black people, and lions, and everything one has read of in books so often that one has begun to think they are only in books and nowhere else. And there is Monkey Mountain, the rock that corresponds with Gibraltar on the other side; the other pillar of Hercules, divided from its fellow by those miles of sea. Larry told us that was where the monkeys come across, but how they make the passage is doubtful: though some people think they have an underground passage of their own. Anyhow, one thing is certain, they get across somehow, for monkeys are found on Gibraltar rock and nowhere else in Spain. I wonder if they can get across the sea; they have not the curiosity to go further into Spain. We passed near enough to signal to the Dolphin agents at Gibraltar. We signalled the number of the *Larry's Luck*, and where we were bound for, and they would telegraph to England, and mother would see in the papers that we had got so far safely.

We were in the Mediterranean, and the sea, instead of being green, was quite blue. There were a great many ships passing through the Straits, principally sailing-vessels, for the wind had been west for a long time, and they had been beating up to get through; and now it had gone straight round into the east, and they were all sailing through splendidly. The next afternoon we came to Almeria and cast anchor, and were fastened to the pier with a great cable, stern on. It seemed so strange to have the ship quite still, and not to hear the screw. I used to say the screw kept me awake at night, but the first night at Almeria I kept waking up just because the screw was silent. It seemed so strange, too, to hear sounds outside the ship, after the great silent highway we had been passing along. Now there were wheels to be heard on shore, and dogs barking, and bells ringing, besides the sounds from the other boats anchored near us.

We lay to just outside, and signalled for a pilot; and he came out to us very soon, a brown-faced man like a monkey, who only spoke a few words of English. Then the *pratique* officers came on to see that there was no sickness on board, and then the custom-house officers, to see that there was no smuggling; and then we were free to go on shore if we liked. But it was getting dark by that time, so we made up our minds to wait till next morning.

There was a great deal to see even from the ship. All around were great, bare, rocky hills, and just over the town a castle with battlements. Part of it was in ruins, and there were marks of shot and shell on its walls, which told of its having been stormed once upon a time. The town itself looked like a churchyard, for all the houses were white and flat-roofed like tombs. We could see passing along the shore trains of mules with gay tassels, and ear-caps, and great panniers on their backs. And there were rough, wooden, two-wheeled carts, drawn by oxen, fastened in by their horns to a heavy wooden yoke. The drivers of these carts were just like matadors in the pictures of bull-fights, with very full white shirts and tight trousers with ribbons at the knees, and crimson sashes round their waists, and silk handkerchiefs round their heads, and broad-brimmed, black velvet hats, and they drove the oxen with long goads tipped with iron.



Tom unexpectedly "chalked."

As we stood on the deck in the evening a lot of little chaps came swimming round the ship, and Larry threw halfpence for them to dive for. We wrapped them up in paper, so we could see them going down through the clear, blue water; and the little boys dived after them, with their copper-coloured legs kicking about. They put the pence into their cheeks to be ready to dive again, and one of them got such a cheek full that he looked just like the monkeys in the Zoological Gardens. They had got hold of two English words, 'Come on,' and 'Johnnie,' and they shouted these at us perpetually.

The next day a cargo of iron ore was being taken in on the *Larry's Luck*, and the deck was crowded with brown-faced, jabbering Spaniards. There was a stevedore, or overseer, to keep them at work, but there seemed more quarrelling and chattering than anything else.

Tom, Larry, and Bertie exploring the town.

'They don't know what work is, these artful Spaniards!' said Larry. 'They pay two men to do nothing, and six more to help them do it! And don't you leave any of your things about in your berths. They're the worst set of thieves in creation—except, perhaps, the Greeks; they'd pick their own pockets rather than be honest. My port is next the gangway, and I've had a fellow's head through my berth twice this morning while I was dressing. The second time it happened I gave the fellow a crack with the back of my hair-brush, as a gentle reminder.'

The agent was soon on board with the captain and purser, and the ship's chandler was talking to the steward. I thought the ship's chandler must be the man who supplied candles to the ship, but I found that he supplied all sorts of stores.

The mates had gone to have a bathe along the shore, so Larry, Bertie, and I, set off to explore the town.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was very hot and dusty, and the people stared at us as if we had been savages; some of them stood still to have a good look at us as we went by, or walked backwards in front of us a few steps, and certainly they found us very amusing, for they always ended with a laugh.

'One comfort,' said Larry, as we walked along, 'is, that it don't matter a bit what one does abroad. These old dons set it all down to English manners. If one danced a hornpipe down the street, or went on one's head, they'd not be a bit more surprised than they are now. "How do you do, my dear? I hope you'll know us again another time!" "Now then, old Sancho Panza! out of the way before your eyes drop out! Don't you see there are three Rule Britannias coming?"'

The streets were very narrow, and the shops looked very dull, as the shutters were all closed to keep out the sun, and up above there were balconies with the window-blinds drawn out over them, and dark-eyed women peeping out at the sides. None of the women wore hats or bonnets, but all wore black lace things—mantillas they are called—over their heads, or bright-coloured silk handkerchiefs; and as for the children, they wore very little of anything. One very small, curly-headed thing came and took hold of Larry's hand and walked across the market-place with us; he had only a little pink pinafore coming about to his waist, and a necklace, and he had such a jolly little grinning brown face. The market-place was all in a blaze with the sun, and most of the market-people seemed asleep, stretched out full in the sun. No wonder they get so brown. The fruit was in heaps and piles all about; melons, grapes, peaches, pomegranates, and figs, and it was so hot, and we were so thirsty and tired.

'Hullo!' said Larry, 'we must have some of this fruit. Let's try what they'll make of a shilling.'

He stirred up one man from his sleep, but after looking it over he mumbled something, shrugged his shoulders, and gave it back, settling off directly to sleep again. The second attempt was more successful. After a tremendous deal of jabbering and consultation the man began nodding, and Larry pointed to the grapes and I to the peaches, and the man began handing them out to us. We filled our pockets, we filled our hands, and still the man offered us more. It seemed as if that shilling would have bought half the market.

'Hold hard!' said Larry; 'enough is as good as a feast. We shall have to charter a donkey to carry it if we take much more.'

So we went off to a place called the Alameda, a sort of promenade with trees and benches, and sat down to eat till our spoils were more easy to carry. We got quite a crowd of starers round us there, and Larry harangued them on the rudeness of their behaviour and the defects in their clothing; which did them as little harm as good, for they did not understand a word, but it made them laugh all the same. We found plenty to amuse ourselves with, and I expect we stared as much as the Spaniards.

'You see,' said Larry, 'we can go anywhere, for we don't understand when they tell us to get out.'

So we went wherever our fancy took us, into shops and hotel courts, and even into some private houses, I fancy. We went into one large, dark church, where the air was heavy with incense, and where a few ladies in mantillas were kneeling and fanning themselves; but they were not saying their prayers, for they were talking to each other in low tones all the time. A priest in a long black gown, with all his hair shaved off except just a fringe, came and spoke to us. He looked very kind, but Larry nudged us to come away.

So we came out into the daylight again, and went to see a lot of girls packing grapes in barrels for shipping, and looked through a great iron grating at the prisoners in the lock-up. They looked like a set of fierce wild beasts, and if dirt is any sign of wickedness they must have been desperate ruffians; and yet I don't know, for I saw a sad-faced woman lift up a baby, with its feet all swaddled up in a bundle, to the grating to be kissed by one of those ruffians.

'We ought to be off,' said Larry at last; 'my internal clock tells me it is dinner time: doesn't yours, Tom? But before I go, I must really inquire of that old fellow over there what he thinks of me, for he's been staring at us for the last half-hour.'

So he stepped across the Alameda, took off his hat to the old gentleman, and made a very polite bow. But the next moment he came rushing back to us, crimson to his ears and bursting with laughter.

'Come, Tom and Bertie, quick! Sure it's doubled up and sat upon that I am altogether!'

'Why, what's happened?' I asked, while we set off towards the quay.

'Why, I asked him very politely what his opinion of me was on due reflection, and what do *you* think he said?'

'Some gibberish, I suppose.'

'Not a bit of it! worse luck to it! He said in English, "I think you are an impudent young jackanapes!"'

And when I glanced round I saw that the old gentleman was shaking with laughter too.

We spent two days at Almeria, and went on shore several times and had great fun. It was so pleasant to come back to the ship and hail it from the pier, '*Larry's Luck*, ahoy!' and have a boat sent off to bring one across. The agent was on board a good deal. He was very kind to us, and goodnatured, and had lots of amusing stories.

(*To be continued.*)

THE FORCED RABBIT.

A FUNNY FACT TOLD IN VERSE.

YOU have heard of forced potatoes, have you not, dear little folks?
Of melons forced, and cucumbers, and grapes in purple cloaks?
But I have seen, and handled too, and oh! the sight was funny,
A rabbit forced, a tiny one, a snow-white little Bunny.

Two little girls of ten and twelve—I love them very much—
Once thought a tenant they would like for their new rabbit-hutch;

So off to town they drove one day and there a rabbit bought,
And home the furry tenant in their pony-carriage brought.

They petted, nursed, and fondled it, and showed it every care,
And said, before it went to bed, its sheets of straw they'd air;
They also begged it very hard itself at home to make,
And hoped, although its bed was strange, it would not lie awake.

How happy was this bunny white, I really cannot tell,
But certainly it happy looked, and was extremely well;
Its eyes were bright, its nose was cool, its tongue a lovely pink,
And, for its pulse—well, that was strong and regular, I think!

When summer came the little girls were taken to the sea,
And left their rabbit with the groom, a youth of twenty-three.
They bathed, and dug upon the shore, and played with cousin Jack;
They heard the band upon the sand, and rode on donkey-back.

Then home they came, and went at once to see their bunny dear,
To stroke his ribs, and pat his head, and feel each wiry ear:
But oh! alas! they found him not—the rabbit was not there!
His hutch, like Mrs. Hubbard's shelf, was very, very bare.

Now, where is he? they called the groom, the youth of twenty-three,
And said, 'O George! where's Bunny gone? Oh, where, oh, where is he?'
'He's in the hot-house,' George replied; 'the gardener put him there,
For he was growing thinner, Miss, and losing all his hair.'

They trotted to the garden, then, and there the bunny found,
And 'neath a vine beheld their pet reposing on the ground.
'Why, what is that?' they both exclaimed. 'Can that a rabbit be?
I never in my life before so strange a thing did see!'

They were surprised, and certainly the sight was strange to view,
For Bunny looked so very huge, and such a bundle too!
Such fat he had, and lots of hair—they longed a bit to pull—
He was exactly like a ball of living cotton wool.

No tailor ever did produce a coat so superfine,
'Twas white as snow, and very thick on stomach, chest, and spine;
As thick as heads of stupid boys, with countenances glum;
And oh! the hair was very long—as long as any sum!

A host of friends and neighbours came the funny sight to see,
To one and all a rabbit forced was quite a novelty;
And everybody petted him, and loved him very much,
And brought him goody-goodies for the larder in his hutch.

* * * * *

One day,—and now my pen and ink the deepest mourning wear—
They let him out upon the lawn for exercise and air;
They turned their backs—two dogs rushed up, and one, with swelling chest,
Seized Bunny by his woolly throat, and—you must guess the rest!

ROBERT ST. JOHN CORBET.

THE DOG AND THE BREECHES.

—o—

IN the *Sportsman's Annual* it is recorded that a Suffolk gentleman, being on an excursion with a friend, and having a Newfoundland dog also accompanying him, the animal soon became the subject of conversation; when his master told his friend that the dog would, upon receiving the order, return and fetch any article left at any distance. To confirm this assertion, a marked shilling was put under a large stone by the roadside—having been previously shown to the dog. The two friends then rode for three miles, when the dog received his master's signal to return for the shilling he had seen put under the stone. The dog turned back, and the gentlemen rode on and reached home; but to their surprise and disappointment, the hitherto faithful messenger did not return during the day. It afterwards appeared that he had gone to the place where the shilling was deposited, but the stone being too large for his strength to remove, he had stayed howling at the place till two horsemen, riding by, and attracted by his seeming distress, stopped to look at him; when one of them alighting removed the stone, and seeing the shilling put it into his pocket, not at the time knowing it to be the object of the dog's search. The dog followed their horses for twenty miles, remained undisturbed in the room where they supped, followed the chambermaid into the bed-room, and secreted himself under one of the beds. The possessor of the shilling hung his breeches up by the bedside; but when the travellers were both asleep the dog took the garment in his mouth, and, leaping out of the window, which was left open on account of the sultry heat, reached the house of his master at four o'clock in the morning, with the prize he had made free with, and in the pockets of which were found a watch and money, that were returned upon being advertised; when the whole mystery was unravelled, to the admiration of all parties.—*The Parlour Menagerie.*

The Dog and the Breeches. By Harrison Weir.

'THE PRIZE' for Girls and Boys. Price One Penny every month.
May be had everywhere.

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Chatterbox.

The Hidalgo leaving the Steamship

'ALL'S WELL!'

(*Continued from page* 334.)

THE ship's chandler was a most villainous-looking fellow. We used to call him the Hidalgo; and Larry said he was the richest and most dishonest man in Almeria, 'and that's saying a great deal.' As to Captain Brady, he called him 'Ali Baba and the forty thieves' to his face. He spoke English very well, but in the stiff, measured way that foreigners often do. He said to me, 'Captain Brady likes his joke. Some people think Captain Brady wish to insult, but I do know it is not that.' I don't think he minded eating a little dirt if he got his money.

That evening, when Bertie and I were sitting in the ladies' cabin, Larry came in.

'Oh, I say! it's such a lark! Old Brown and the Hidalgo are quarrelling like one o'clock in the saloon. The papers are all at sixes and sevens, and the purser is egging them on and setting them by the ears, till it's a wonder if they don't come to blows. Come and see the fun.'

So in we went and found it just as Larry had said. A most furious discussion was going on; the Hidalgo was choking and sputtering, and old Brown obstinate and irritating. Sometimes it was in Spanish, when it sounded like monkeys, and sometimes in English. I don't know how long it would have gone on, but one of the quarter-masters looked in to ask if there was any one more for shore. The anchor had been weighed and the engines had been getting up steam for some time.

It was nine o'clock, and very dark. Even then they did not seem inclined to settle their differences, and they went on wrangling, till all at once the captain lost patience and gave the order, 'Full speed!' and off we went full speed out of the harbour, the landboat which was to take Mr. Brown and the Hidalgo ashore plunging and leaping along by the side. The dispute was settled up then in a hurry, and the papers signed, and Mr. Brown sent up a message to the captain to stop the engines, as he was ready to go ashore. Captain Brady sent down word that he would not stop for any one, and that they were free to go as soon as they liked. The companion-ladder had been shipped and there was only a rope-ladder to get down by. It was not always easy to get into a boat, even from the landing-stage, or when the ship is quite still: but when she is going at full speed, and there is a good bit of sea on, it is a nasty sort of thing to do. Old Brown fumed and stamped about. The Hidalgo scrambled down the rope-ladder and managed to get into the boat, and added to the uproar by screaming to old Brown to come on; but he was afraid to venture, and no wonder. As for the Hidalgo, there was not the least danger of his being drowned. Larry said, if he got his deserts he would certainly be hung, so he could afford to run risks at sea.

At last orders came down from the bridge to lower the companion again, and then Larry, and the purser, and one of the mates, half-helped, half-drove old Brown down, tumbled him into the boat, threw off the ropes, and in a minute they were out of sight in the darkness, a good two miles out from Almeria, the lights of which soon faded from our sight.

CHAPTER IX.

THE next port we came to was Palermo. We reached it at night, a lovely moonlight night, with a silver rippling path across the sea. The Sicilian coast looked like fairyland, with the mountains behind, touched here and there by the moonbeams, and the rocky headlands with their light-houses, and along the shore little lights twinkling here and there from the boats of the tunny-fishers. Palermo itself looked like a nest of lights as we turned round the last headland, and the still waters of the harbour reflected and doubled every light. There were a good many steamers in the harbour, and Captain Brady sent off a boat to the harbour-master to know where we should go, and he gave us a berth close by the light-house at the end of the mole, and just opposite the town. There was the same bustle and noise on board as we got into Palermo as there had been at Almeria, only less chattering, for we had no pilot, but the donkey-engine and the steam-winches did their best to make up for it. There was less fuss about *pratique* and custom-house matters, for these were all got over before we were out of our berths next morning. When we left Almeria I thought I should not like any place so well, but certainly Palermo was a jollier-looking place when I went up on deck the next morning and looked about; I longed to be off and explore, and when the captain told us that all the country round was infested with brigands and that it was not safe to venture outside the city walls, it made it doubly interesting. Those great bare hills looked just the very places for brigands, as if they might be full of caves and hiding-places. Close by the mole is Monte Pellegrino, with its steep zigzag path up the side, and a monastery on the top, and behind the town is Mon Reale and San Martino, with other hills rising behind them again, most of them bare, and brown, and rocky. When the ship's chandler came on board he told us a good deal more about the brigands. He said they were worse than ever, and it was not safe to go up to Mon Reale without an escort, especially for English people. 'They think every Englishman is a milord,' said the captain; 'and made of money, and they don't see why they should not have a share. They think that one man has as much right to be rich as another, and more too; and as other people don't give them their rights they take them.'

'Now, you boys,' he added, 'don't you get into mischief, for I tell you plainly I won't ransom you, even if the brigands bring one of your ears, and promise that the rest of your bodies shall follow in pieces by parcels post unless I pay up for you. So you must look after your own ears, and don't go strutting about as if you had the Bank of England in one pocket and the Mint in the other. Do you hear?'

The ship's chandler, who was not a bit like the Hidalgo, told us of one English gentleman who had made up his mind to go all round the island in 1862,

when it was very unsettled and unsafe. He took a courier with him and they changed clothes; the courier sat inside the carriage and did the fine gentleman, and the Englishman was dressed like an Italian peasant, and sat on the box with a bit of bread and an onion by his side for his dinner, and so he managed to get through the very worst haunts of the brigands.

'I should like just to see some brigands,' I said; 'just to know what they are like!' I had in my mind the picture of robbers in the little theatres.

'I can tell you that,' said the captain; 'they're uncommonly like other thieves, only perhaps rather dirtier. Only take care you don't see too much of them, that's all.'

'I say, Tom,' said Larry, who had got hold of an Italian phrase-book, 'do you understand the lingo at all?'

'Not I,' I answered; 'it's all High Dutch to me!'

'Oh, it's not half so difficult as you would think,' said Larry; 'it's only Latin minced and peppered up a bit. I didn't learn much at Highmore and I've forgotten more than I learnt, but you are a swell at it, and you ought to come out strong in Italian. You just stick an *o*, or *a*, after the words, and put in a *t* before the *z*'s, and there you are. I've got a word or two, and I make them go a long way and eke out with English. I met a man this morning coming sneaking along by the engine-room, and I knew he'd no business there, and I guessed he was bringing spirits to the men, which the captain won't have at any price; so I thought I'd air my Italian: but he did not seem to twig a bit, or else he wouldn't; there's none so blind as those that won't see, and I fancy that I had not got hold of the right words, for I could not lay my hand on the word for 'get out,' so I tried it on 'Getoutiamo via!' but he looked so stupid that I was obliged to fall back on English.'

'Did he understand that?'

'Oh yes, fast enough; but he couldn't very well help it, for I gave him a thorough good English kick to make it plain. If you're speaking to a woman,' Larry went on, 'one must try a little blarney: if it's an old woman, be sure you say "Signorina," for that means "young lady;" and if she happens to be extra ugly, stick on "bella" before "signorina," for it pleases them no end. Now then for the brigands!'

There was a lot of boats round the *Larry's Luck*, and we chose one rowed by a very small boy to take us across the harbour. Larry's directions being given in what he called Italian.

'Now, then, row away hard! Andate al—what's it's name? what's the word, Tom?—landing-place, —quay—chiaga—that's it! Andata al chiaga—over there, stupid! don't you see?'

The Italians row forward instead of backwards like us, and this boy rowed standing, and stepped up on the seat at each pull of the oars. We found out the ship's chandler's place when we landed and changed some money, getting dirty little lira notes, worth about tenpence, and copper soldi. There was much to see in the town, but it would take too long to describe half of it—the old fort Castelmare on the harbour, battered nearly into a ruin by shells from the other side of the small basin, where cannon had been planted on the top of a church, as a suitable position. The old fort had battered back, too, for the houses along the water's edge were all scarred, and dented, and ruinous still, though all this turmoil took place fifteen years ago. Then there was the church where the bell first rang for the Sicilian vespers,—a sign for all the French in Palermo to be murdered. Then there was the long Toledo, paved with great blocks of granite from Etna, and gay with shops and swarming with people. Every third person was a priest, in a long black gown and a broad-brimmed low-crowned hat. Now and then we saw a Capuchin monk in a rough brown habit with a hood to it, and a rope round the waist, and bare feet, looking as if he had stepped out of history three or four centuries ago and could not find his way back again. Then there were the soldiers, queer sort of figures some of them, with tremendous bunches of black feathers at the side of their hats, that must be rather a nuisance in windy weather. There were the macaroni shops, with the long pipes hanging on sticks in yard lengths. We went into one of the shops where it was being made. The paste is put into a great press, which is screwed down by two men, and the paste forced out of little holes at the bottom in long thin pipes, which harden as they dry. Larry let off his 'Grazia, bella signorina,' to the fat old bundle of a woman who kept the shop, and she laughed till she had to hold her sides, and got so red in the face that I thought she was going to have a fit. Then there was the cathedral of St. Rosalie and several other big churches, and the Villa Reale, where the king lives when he comes to Palermo, with state-rooms and Victor Emmanuel's face in all directions, and a little old chapel full of mosaic.

And last, but not least, there were the Catacombs. We turned out of the Toledo to get at them, and went along a quiet side-street, stopped before a large gateway, and rang at a bell. An old Capuchin like the pictures of Friar Tuck opened the door, and motioned us to come in, and led the way down into the Catacombs, which are underground passages lighted from above. All along these passages are arranged boxes with glass sides and rows of still, stiff figures. It looked very much like the room of horrors at Madame Tussaud's, but these figures were not wax-work but real human bodies, which the monks dry by some process, and then dress up and place in the Catacombs, either standing up or in the glass boxes. It was a most ghastly sight, and Bertie, after the first minute or two, refused to go any further, and went back into the sunshine upstairs, while Larry and I went on in this true room of horrors. There were monks in frock and cowl; gentlemen in ordinary everyday dress, coat and trousers and neat boots and kid-gloves; ladies in smart dresses, and ribbons, and artificial flowers; and even little babies in muslin frocks and sashes, with playthings in their hands. Some had been there two hundred years, some had only just been placed there. There was a wreath of fresh flowers laid by one baby's side, as if the mother had only just been there; but I cannot think how people can like to come and see the poor distorted faces, so utterly different to what they must have been in life—brown, and wrinkled, and dry. I think I would rather see the daisies growing in the turf above any one I loved, and think of the resurrection.

(*To be continued.*)

WONDERS OF NATURE.

VESUVIUS.

ONE of the most active volcanoes in the world is Vesuvius. He is a terrible fellow when awake, but he has long naps. Some say he never did any harm before the Christian era. At that time his sloping sides were richly cultivated, and very fertile, and his crown was a slightly hollow plain, where it is said that a battle once took place between the Roman army and Spartacus.

Sixty-three years after Christ was born the mountain began its pranks. Pompeii was then alarmed by a great trembling of the earth, but the alarm subsided, and it was not until sixteen years afterwards that the three cities of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiæ, were buried beneath vast showers of cinders, ashes, and loose fragments: but no lava was thrown out on that occasion. The first stream of lava occurred in 1036, the next violent eruption happened in 1139, and then nearly five hundred years went by before another eruption of any moment took place.

A certain traveller, named Braccim, visited Vesuvius a short time before the tremendous outburst in 1631. He found everything quite placid. The hollow, called the crater, was covered down to the bottom of its sides with brushwood, in which wild boars harboured, and at the lowest part was a grassy plain, where the cattle grazed. The only signs of a volcano were a few ashes strewn about, and three small pools, one filled with hot and bitter water, another more salt than the sea, and the third hot but tasteless. Things remained thus until December, 1631, when the mountain suddenly became convulsed; streams of lava poured from a new crater, and several villages at the foot of the mountain were consumed. It was in this eruption that the city of Resina, built over the old city of Herculaneum, was destroyed by the fiery stream. Since 1631, hardly ten years have passed without an eruption taking place. In 1663 thousands of lives were lost by a torrent of boiling water, which burst out of the mountain with the lava. In 1737 the lava flowed like a river of fire through the town of Torre del Greco, into the sea. That town has been destroyed and rebuilt over and over again.

Sir William Hamilton, who resided many years near Vesuvius, has left interesting memorials of this wonderful mountain. A few extracts from his notes may be acceptable:—

Oct. 4, 1762.—An eruption took place, and there was terrible thunder and lightning, but upon the mountain only, where, in the midst of the blackest smoke, a bright but pale electrical fire played about in zigzag lines. Many meteors, like shooting stars, were seen also in the eruption. The ashes cast out are poisonous. A countryman lost eight hogs from the ashes being mixed with their food in the trough. When the ashes grow whiter, it is a sign that the eruption is coming to an end.

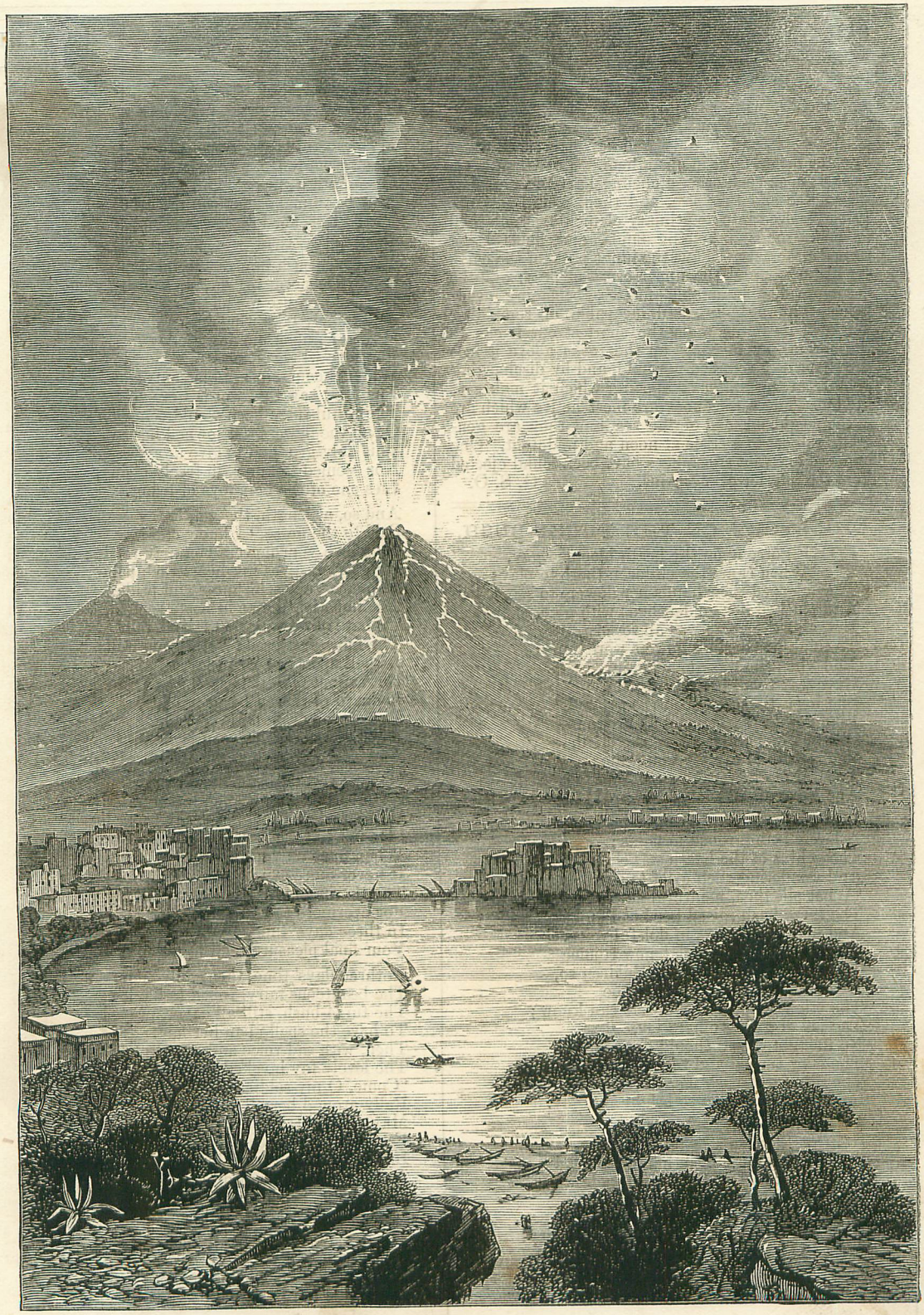
Oct. 19, 1767.—The twenty-seventh eruption since that which destroyed Pompeii has begun. In December, 1766, the crater was twenty feet deep. In the middle of the plain, at the bottom, was a little mountain, with a deep hole in its apex. Sir W. Hamilton threw stones down the hole, and could count a hundred leisurely before he heard them dash against the bottom. In March, April, and May, 1767, the little mountain was active, and kept growing in height. In August lava flowed from the little mountain, and filled the valley. By the middle of September the valley was too full to hold any more, so it began to flow down the sides of the great mountain. By October 15th the little mountain had grown to the height of 185 feet. On October 19th a very dense column of smoke burst out of the little mountain. It took the exact shape of a huge pine-tree, and, having mounted to an immense height, was carried by the wind to Caprea. About 100 yards below the edge of the old crater the lava burst forth, with a violent noise, from a new mouth. The mountain split open, a fountain of liquid fire shot up, and then rolled directly towards Sir William. In a moment he was enveloped in thick darkness; but he ran as well as he could for three miles, the earth shaking under his feet. Every moment he expected a new mouth might yawn before him, and cut off his retreat. He also dreaded lest some of the rocks under which he had to pass might be shaken down and crush him to atoms. The pumice-stones fell about him like a shower of hail. In Portici, which is on the site of Herculaneum, doors and windows were forced violently open; there was a dreadful hissing noise; for many days the sun was darkened; and the mountain could not be seen.

Sunday, August 8, 1780.—About nine in the evening there was a loud report. It shook the houses of Portici so that the people rushed into the streets. In an instant a fountain of liquid fire began to rise from Vesuvius, and reached a height that amazed every one who saw it—there was a colossal cloud of smoke, in which a pale, bright, electrical fire played about in zigzag lines. Large stones, weighing thirty pounds, were found miles away, and ashes fell a hundred miles off. But the convent of Ottiano suffered most of all from a deluge of stones, some of which weighed as much as sixty pounds. These masses, when they fell on the ground, broke into many pieces, and covered a large space around them with vivid sparks of fire. The poor monks could hardly breathe the sulphurous air; and if the shower had lasted, Ottiano would have been buried like Pompeii. In twenty-five minutes' time ashes had fallen to the depth of four feet.

For the first mile lava flows as fast as an ordinary river. Afterwards its course is slower, and at length it moves at about the rate of three miles an hour, and so forth, until it stops. It is red, like melted glass; but, though a liquid, it is impossible to make any impression on it.

If our statements are correct, it seems there are nearly 200 volcanoes; and ninety, or nearly one-half, are insular. To Europe belong 13; to Asia, 66; to America, 116; while Africa does not seem to possess one.

And how are these destructive and fearful erup-



Vesuvius.

tions caused? It is supposed that various minerals and metals, with sulphur, nitre, vitriol, and other frisky sorts of materials, are bedded in various strata of the earth, and lie quiet and harmless until water by some means flows in upon them. They then begin to exert upon each other a chemical action; and they decompose and take fire, and then, each substance being resolved into its primary elements, is enlarged in bulk—solids becoming fluids, and fluids being turned into gases. Thus the inner parts of the earth are disturbed, and the upper crust quakes; and the decomposed, inflammable matter, becoming every moment more bulky, and incapable of remaining longer in its limits, finds the shortest cut it can to the surface, by heaving up the rocks above it into the shape of a rounded pyramid, and by discharging itself from the crater or opening which it makes at the top. Those volcanoes are most active which are in the neighbourhood of the sea, and they are generally subject to a crisis at noon and midnight. One hundred different substances have been found ejected from the interior of Vesuvius. G. S. O.

THE STORY OF THE FURZE-BUSH.

THE gorse upon the heath bloomed gay,
When came the children there to play;
They clapped their hands her flowers to see,
And plucked her golden buds with glee.
But, ah! the gorse was all forlorn,
To think her darling flowers were gone;
And when she was alone again,
Gave way to all her angry pain.
She wept, till tears upon the ground,
Like dewdrops glistened all around—
'Those cruel children,' so she cried,
'To rob me of my joy and pride;
To steal my flowers so sweet and fair,
And leave me desolate and bare!'

Whilst thus lamenting, near her came
A lovely being, robed in flame;
The genius of the heath was she,
And wondering such grief to see.
'What ails thee, mournful flower?' she cried.
The furze-bush raised her head and sighed,
And told her wrongs in doleful voice.
The fairy smiled. 'Oh! now rejoice
That you have pleased the children so,
And do not mar with selfish woe
The brightest pleasure flowers can know;
The joy of giving others joy,
No thought of self should e'er alloy.'
The fairy turned and tripped away,
The silly furze-bush many a day
Bewailed her flowers so bright and gay.

Again the lovely fay drew near,
Her eyes were sad, her mien severe,
And low the furze-bush hung her head
At sound of the approaching tread.
'Oh, furze-bush,' said the gentle fay,
'Once thou wast glad, and bright, and gay,
How art thou changed with wearing grief!
For selfish tears bring no relief:
They but increase the soul's distress,
With added weight of heaviness.'

She paused; but, wrapt in sullen pride,
The furze-bush stood, nor aught replied.
The fay went on: 'This will not do,
My peaceful heath is spoilt by you;
Your gloomy looks and doleful cries
Offend alike our ears and eyes,
And I command that you restrain
Your grief, nor longer thus complain.'

Then, all a-glow with wounded pride,
The furze-bush in a rage replied:
'Shall I consent my flowers to lose?
Let children use me as they choose?
And tamely take what insult they
May heap upon me day by day?
For they will soon return, I know,
When once again my blossoms blow.'
The fairy saw that words were vain,
The wilful furze-bush would complain;
Of all the flowers that owned her sway,
This only grudged to give away,
Nor seemed to know, in freely giving,
Lies one of the best joys of living.

And so, at length, the gentle fay
Said to the gorse, 'I know one way
By which your flowers you may retain;
But, ah! it gives my heart such pain
To mark your selfishness and pride.'
The impatient gorse in haste replied,
'What is that way? O fairy! tell.'
The fairy answered: 'Mark me well,
A spell upon you I can lay,
But cannot take that spell away;
A guard of thorns I can provide,
To keep you safe on every side,
As soldiers brave for you to fight,
And guard your flowers so golden bright.'

'Oh, powerful fairy! now, I pray
At once this charm upon me lay.'
'Nay, foolish gorse!' the fay replied,
'Do not so thoughtlessly decide;
When once on you this spell is laid,
It never more can be unmade;
The thorns my mystic charm will bring
For evermore to you will cling.
In three days' time, I will return
Your final pleasure then to learn.'

In three days' time, then, duly came
The beauteous fairy, robed in flame;
The furze-bush, still all eager, prayed
To have the spell upon her laid.
Then, with sad voice and out-stretched arm,
The lovely fay invoked the charm.
'Come, O my soldiers, to the gorse,
Rally around her all your force;
May all who try to pluck her flower,
Feel the full vengeance of your power.'
Instant upon the furze-bush grew
A thousand thorns of dingy hue,
With pointed spikes so sharp and long,
Like band of soldiers, tall and strong.

The gorse upon the heath bloomed gay,
When came the children there to play;
They clapped their hands its flowers to see,
And would have plucked its buds with glee.

'Ah, pretty flowers!' they joyous cried,
But when to gather one they tried,
The thorns soon drove them back again,
With sudden cries and screams of pain.

Again the children came to play,
And still the gorse bloomed bright and gay;
One little boy essayed to pick
One of the flowers that grew so thick.
The other children shouted, 'Stay!
And from the gorse keep far away;
She is so spiteful, that, indeed,
She'll prick your hands and make them bleed.'
The selfish furze-bush plainly heard,
And 'spiteful' is an ugly word;
Across her savage triumph swept
A dismal shadow, and she wept,
And deeper did that shadow fall
As days went on, and, shunned by all,
The furze-bush learned, when all too late,
Of selfishness the certain fate. E. D.

THE POPPY AND THE BEE.

A WILD Bee, which had flown far without having breakfasted, at length entered a garden—the first he had seen.

'What a Paradise!' he exclaimed.

The first thing that attracted his attention was a full-blown poppy; but accustomed only to mint, wild thyme, and such-like fare, he approached the gaudy beauty with some diffidence.

'A little pollen, please?' he at length ventured to say in the humblest manner.

'Be off! be off!' was the ill-natured reply.

The poor Bee was almost fainting with hunger and fatigue, and asked leave to rest himself for a little.

'Be off!' returned the haughty flower; 'I don't encourage idle vagrants like you. Stay at home, and you will not have to complain of being tired; sit upon your own stalk, and you won't have to support yourself by begging. Be off!'

Did the silly Poppy imagine that butterflies, bees, and such-like creatures, were nothing else than wandering blossoms? However this may be, it was overheard one day talking to itself after this fashion:—

'What is a flower born for, I should like to know, but to see and to be seen and admired? These pansies, with all their pretensions, are such a set of flats! so low-born and ill-bred!'

With the gardener, the great judge of plants and the arbiter of their fortunes, the pansies were especial favourites; and he took great pains and no small pleasure in rearing them.

It so happened that he passed just as the Poppy was exclaiming her last 'Be off!' and scornfully shaking her glowing petals after the retreating bee.

Looking angrily at the flower he said, 'What is sweeter than honey? and how should we have honey without bees? and how should bees live if all flowers were as vain and empty-headed as you?'

So saying, he plucked it up by the root and threw it over the garden wall.

The Bee cheerfully resumed its flight, and soon alighted in the midst of a plot of mignonette, where it was regaled with the sweetest nectar. J. C.

THE PRINCESS OF WALES AND HER SONS.

THIS picture of the Princess of Wales and her sailor-like sons is singularly appropriate just now, for it is exactly a thousand years since the British navy was born.

We may now carol forth, with perfect truth, the praises of that flag which has 'braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze.'

The Princess of Wales is a modern representative of those bold Danish sea-kings who, a thousand years ago, brought sorrow to the British shores.

Her royal husband likewise represents Egbert and Alfred: the first being the wise prince, who consolidated the seven Saxon kingdoms into one; the second being that great and good sovereign who was never known to be idle, who fought fifty battles for his throne, and who, above all, was the father of the English navy.

Much may be expected of the lads who have cemented this union. May they be sea-kings in the best sense of the word!

Why was the terrible Sweyn allowed to steer his serpent-shaped man-of-war into an English harbour? Why did not the English fleet stop his progress?

It was too small and feeble. Foolish kings had arisen after the wise Alfred, and had undone much of his good work.

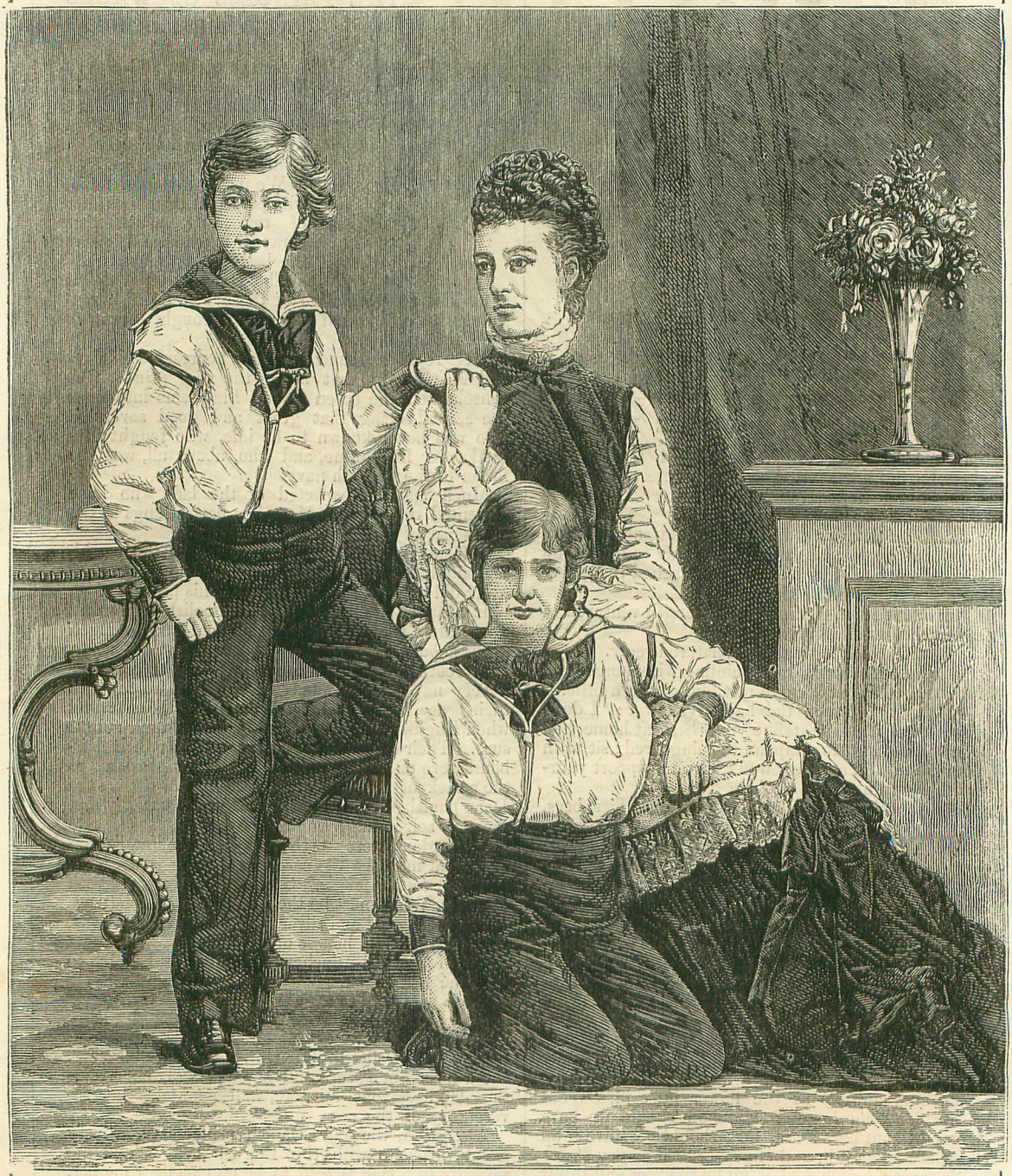
Moreover, the Anglo-Saxons, though at one time a very naval people, had made a mistake fatal to their peace. They had lost their love of the sea: and when Englishmen as a nation do that, their ruin is sure. Their ships had fallen to pieces; their harbours were uncared for; their coasts were exposed to the attack of the enterprising Dane. And thus the Dane punished, with awful severity, the timidity and the easy self-indulgence of the Saxon.

If England were worth sacking a thousand years ago, what must be the case now? She is a casket full of precious jewels. She is brimming over with wealth. What must be the value of all the pictures, works of art, gold and silver plate, in the cities, towns, palaces, halls, and houses of England?

When Marshal Blucher rode through London in 1814, he lifted up his hands and said, 'Oh! what a city this would be to sack!'

There are many, it may be, who would gladly share in the plunder of England, and look with satisfaction on her downfall. But, with God's blessing, she will remain secure and happy, if only she avoids the Anglo-Saxons' mistake, and maintains her sovereignty of the seas.

Alexandra, the fair Danish princess, is a very great favourite with the English people, and deservedly so. She is said to be an excellent mother, and we hope that, under her influence, the future king of England will grow up as wise, laborious, persevering, and beloved, as the man who launched the British navy a thousand years ago. G. S. O.



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Chatterbox.

The Porcupine. By HARRISON WEIR.

THE PORCUPINE.

From the French.

A PORCUPINE is not beautiful, but he is singular: he is a cross and silly fellow, but he is original. His attraction is his odd face, where one finds something of the rat, of the rabbit, of the marmot, of the pig, and of the hedgehog, combined. His thick-set body, his blunt muzzle, his hooked claws, his short legs and heavy feet, his sharp teeth, his lazy and slow pace, his sleepy air, his skin bristled with quills, which he can stick up and lower like swords at his will. He is a living armour; one might almost say, one of those Chinese warriors which are drawn on old-fashioned screens, all bristling with darts. He is only a warrior to laugh at. His body is covered with bayonets, but with these bayonets one makes penholders. He passes whole days, buried, barricaded in his burrow, immovable and silent, as if he were conforming to the Arab precept,—'Put the bolt to your door, and do not speak when there is a bird in the branches.' An unnatural parent, a bad-tempered husband, he lives alone in the midst of darkness. He only loves the night. When everything else is asleep he is awake; he is out when everything else is at home. We may see rise from beneath the earth a sort of gigantic pin-cushion, and hear a little noise like castanets mingled with happy grunts. It is the porcupine who is supping by starlight, and who is gnawing with greediness fruits, roots, bark, and whatever Providence provides for him. But at the slightest noise he draws all his swords out of the scabbards and decamps, avoiding with the same haste both friends and enemies. He only seeks for silence and isolation, and if it is true that solitude awakes ideas, the porcupine would be a profound thinker. But he does not think: he grumbles, gnaws, and sleeps. The porcupine has ceased to frequent the shores of the Mediterranean. He is rarely met with in southern Europe; but he is found in India, Java, and Borneo. Very common in the forests of South America, he climbs up trees, performs gymnastics like a squirrel, and suspends himself by the tail, after the custom of monkeys, to branches and creepers. He abounds chiefly in Algeria. For the Arabs, his flesh is a luxury, and his chase a holiday. They entrap him with skill, they eat him with delight.

The hunters of the porcupine form an odd brotherhood, which has its rights, its laws, and its fête-day.

Irritable but timid, blustering but silly, when the porcupine is taken, he goes backwards and forwards, gives himself terrible airs; grunting, grumbling, snoring, and bristling, he appears to say, 'I am formidable, do not approach me! he who rubs me will get pricked.' But he trembles in his skin, and he is very much afraid when he is rubbed himself.

C. S. C.

'ALL'S WELL!'

(*Continued from page* 339.)

CHAPTER X.

DURING our first two days at Palermo we saw nothing of the brigands, not even anything that one could possibly imagine like them, though we went up to Mon Reale chiefly with the object of an encounter with them. On the third day we were to leave Palermo, so all hopes of an adventure were dying away, and I must say I felt terribly disappointed, and so, I think, did Larry too. It was all the more provoking, because we heard such lots of stories about them. Every time the ship's chandler came on board he had some fresh story of these encounters; and Mr. Ray, too, was full of them. Even on Monte Pellegrino some tourists had been stopped and robbed only a few days before, Mr. Ray told us, and there were some desperate characters about, whom the police could not catch hold of.

'Now, you boys, don't you get into danger,' said the captain.

'You'd better stop aboard,' said Mr. Ray.

Larry looked at me, and I at Larry, and I saw he was up to something. We had not been up Monte Pellegrino yet, and had not thought of doing so, as the path looked very steep and dull, and there was so much more to be seen. However, Mr. Ray's warning suddenly made it seem the most interesting place in the world.

'I say, Larry,' I said, 'I'm sorry we've not been up it; aren't you?'

'Wait a bit,' he said; and when we were alone he burst out, 'Are you up to a lark, Tom?'

'Any amount,' I answered.

'We won't be bullied by old Ray. He's such a coward himself, he never stirs off the ship; he's afraid of those great ears of his being clipped. Now you keep it all close, for if the captain hears it he'll set his face against it.'

'But when shall we go, Larry?' I said, for it was five o'clock then, and we were to sail early next morning.

'To-night,' he answered, 'if you're game.'

'But the captain?'

'Oh, he's going off to spend the evening with the agent, and he won't be back till ten o'clock, most likely. We'll turn in early, shut our cabin doors, and then make off. We can easily get off without any one seeing. There's always lots of boats about, and we can just drop into one quietly. There's next to no watch kept; and if Burns sees us, he'll hold his tongue and not spoil sport. We'd better leave Bertie behind, and we'll cut up Monte Pellegrino in no time, and bring old Ray a prickly pear from the very top for his breakfast to-morrow.'

'What about getting on board again?' I suggested.

'Oh! we'll do that somehow; if there's no boats

about we can come along the stern ropes. Oh! we shall do fast enough. But I say, there's the captain! I hope he has not heard what we said.'

We had been talking just outside the wheel-house, and as Larry spoke, I saw that the captain was in there looking at the compass; but he seemed intent on his examination and not to notice that we were so near, and he went off in a minute to old Ray and was talking to him for some time.

'I never did! as the stewardess says,' said Larry just before tea; 'if there isn't old Ray going ashore! Wonders will never cease! Ahoy, there, Mr. Mate! Give my compliments to the brigands and tell them we're looking out a crooked sixpence for your ransom.'

The captain went off after tea, during which meal Larry kept yawning and rubbing his eyes and stretching with the most exaggerated sleepiness.

'I'd advise you,' said the captain, 'to turn in early, as you're so tired:' and there was a queer twinkle in his eye which made me think he must have known something of our plans.

'Hurroo! hurroo!' said Larry, very wide awake and dancing round the quarter-deck when the captain was gone. 'I was shivering in my shoes for fear the captain should say, "Now, boys, keep aboard till I come back, and don't get into mischief;" but he didn't.'

We told Bertie our plans, and he tried to persuade us not to go, and declared he should be in a fever all the time we were away; but Larry made light of it, declaring there was not the slightest danger, and that we should be back before he could say Jack Robinson. We went to our cabins at eight and then waited till everything seemed quiet. That bothering stewardess stood talking in the passage ever so long to the steward's boys, till Larry got so impatient that he was nearly resolved to dash past and chance her noticing us. But at last she went off into the pantry, and Larry and I crept out of our cabins, along the passage, and out on to the moonlit deck. There was a lamp burning at the top of the companion, and very often one of the quarter-masters was sitting there; but there was no one there to-night, and in a minute we were over the side of the ship and down the ladder. There was a boat rocking in the moonlight a long way off, but it seemed to be empty till Larry gave a low whistle, when a head appeared and the boat came towards us directly, and soon took us across the little bit of water between the ship and the mole. All was quiet on the pier, though from the town we could hear plenty of noise, and from a ship near at hand there was the sound of singing, and English voices in some forecastle merry-making; but it was perfectly still round us, so that we could hear the gentle lap of the water against the steps when we landed, and the drops falling from the blades of the oar as the boat glided away from us. We did not stop to listen, for we were standing in the broad moonlight, and we did not wish to be seen from the ship, so we ran up the steps and along the pier till we were in the shadow of the wall, nearly tumbling over a man who was crouching there in the darkness.

'Now, then,' said Larry: 'so far, so good. Come on, Tom!'

We knew the way well enough. A little way along the quay, passing the sterns of a good many ships anchored there, and then off to the right along a narrow road with high walls on either side; a confiscated convent on one side, I think. A dog barked at us furiously from inside one of the walls, and Larry tossed a pebble over at him, which made him more savage still. We ran on briskly till we reached the place where the path began to ascend, and there we stopped to take breath. The dog was again barking angrily, but it could not still be bearing malice against us; it must be some other passer-by. Then we began the ascent; it was certainly very steep and stony. There were prickly pears growing on either side, with their great, awkward, fleshy, prickly leaves, and their odd line of fruit round the edge. The moonlight threw queer shadows of them on the path, which startled one now and then.

'How still it is!' said Larry after a bit. I think it was for an excuse to stop a minute that he said it, and I was glad enough to stop too. It was so still that our footsteps quite echoed on the stony path, the only sound to be heard—except another footstep lower down, that stopped too a moment after ours did, and then it was quite silent. On we went, higher still, and then stopped again. How solitary! No one but ourselves on that stony path—except—yes, down below, at one of the turns of the zigzag, we saw a man's form for a minute in the moonlight, which passed out of sight before I could say 'Look there!' But at that moment my heart gave a great jump and I felt a bit queer, for on the path at our feet lay the clear shadow of a man's hat. It was not Larry's, it was not mine, it was no prickly-pear leaf this time; it was a man's head with a wide-brimmed, high-crowned hat. I turned round sharply, but I could see nothing but the rough stone wall and prickly pears, and when I looked at the path again the shadow was gone. I don't know if Larry saw it, but he said,—

'Come on, Tom! let's put a spurt on: it will be quicker work coming down!'

So we did not stop again till we reached the top where the dark monastery stood, without a single light in the windows, or a sign of life anywhere about.

It was a grand view that lay before us. At our feet Palermo sparkling with lights, and the harbour traced out by the lamps round it, and beyond and above it a vast expanse of moonlit sea and sky. But we were neither of us quite in a state to admire it, for I was longing to be on the way back, and Larry seemed quite as restless. However, we stood for a minute or two looking about us, and I picked two or three prickly pears from a plant growing near us.

'Now then,' said Larry, 'let's go just round the monastery, and then we'll be off down again. Just lay those prickly things down, we'll pick them up as we come back.'

So we made our way round and came back to where we had been standing not five minutes before.

'Hullo!' said Larry.

'I say!' said I. 'Surely it was here, wasn't it? Well, this is a go!'

And then we looked all about the rocky terrace, where every straw was plainly visible in the moonlight, and then at one another in utter perplexity, for

"How solitary! No one but ourselves on that stony path."

the prickly pears were entirely gone from the place where we laid them down, and there was not a sign of them to be seen. It was no use standing there, however, and scratching our heads would not bring them back again, nor explain where they had gone.

'Perhaps one of the old monks was on the watch and popped out while we were round the other side. Never mind, there are plenty more.'

So Larry picked three more and we set off down the hill at a good pace, neither of us feeling quite easy in our mind at the strange disappearance, but both pretending to think nothing of it.

Our spirits rose as we got lower down, for every step was bringing us nearer to the *Larry's Luck* and safety, and we got along at such a fine rate. We were nearly at the bottom and in sight of the narrow road with high walls, when Larry all at once pulled up short and laid his hand on my arm.

"A hoarse voice said 'Ecco!' and we were prisoners."

'I say, Tom, look there! Didn't you see something move in the shadow of that wall? I'm sure there's some one in hiding there.'

I looked where he pointed, but could see nothing.

'Well, perhaps it was only my fancy. But look here, Tom, fetch your breath and let's make a rush for it. Once we're past that lane, we're in sight of the ship and all right. Now then!'

Off we set, running abreast as the pathway was broader; but I must say I felt a little creepy as we darted in the shadow of the wall.

'Keep it up, Tom!' panted Larry. 'It's all——'

But he did not finish the sentence, for at that moment we were seized from behind; something thick and heavy like a cloak thrown over our heads, and a hoarse voice said 'Ecco!' and we were prisoners.

(To be continued.)

PUNCH AND JUDY IN FRANCE.

THE following incident was related by a gentleman travelling in France during the war between France and Germany:—

It was a long and dreary journey to Calais, as the trains were crowded with troops. After many hours we reached a small station, where there was to be a long delay. It was near midnight, no lodging to be had and the cold intense. A young artillery officer who had been travelling with me began to complain of hunger, and I had not eaten for many hours. Fortunately, however, I had half a roll of concentrated beef tea, and my companion borrowed a tin pot from one of the engine-drivers, and cutting slices from the roll, mixed them with some lumps of ice, and placed the pot on the dying embers of the engine fire. In ten minutes we enjoyed a delightful steaming bason of excellent soup.

It was something more than chance that then suggested to us to take a brisk walk whilst we were waiting. The night was radiant with brightness, and the snow glistening under the white moon. After an hour's walking we stopped short at something we saw on the side of the road, which looked like a sentry-box; but what soldier would have one of ten feet high? I went straight up to it, and then saw, to my intense surprise, an unmistakable Punch and Judy. The poor thin rag of baize was drawn tightly round the wooden pillars to keep out the cold. Close by was a big drum, and a little further on the ashes of a fire that had gone out. Seeing no sign of life, I pulled open the curtain, and the noise awoke two men, who had been sleeping on the ground close together; and in the arms of one lay a little dog, so weak and benumbed with cold that it had not the strength to bark at us. Before we heard a word of their story we set to and lighted a glorious fire; the gipsy kettle was swinging over it, filled with the remainder of our essence of beef and fresh ice. The little dog was placed on an old coat, close to the fire, and then we four sat round it; and what a strange scene it was! So strange that I could hardly realize it, as I looked at the brightening faces of the two men; but the officer showed not the least surprise in the world. He busied himself in heaping more wood on the fire, and adding to the contents of the kettle from the roll of beef. When the soup was ready, neither of the men would taste it till the little performing dog had lapped up many mouthfuls. It is impossible to tell how touching and brave this action seemed, and how it silently drew us to the two strollers. There was no mistaking their appetite when once they began. At last, when the tobacco had gone round, I asked them what on earth brought them to France in such fearful times? One of them answered that they thought the French would be hard up for amusement, and they had been in other parts of France before, and knew something of the language. They had wandered down from the sea into the heart of the country, and had everywhere been kindly received, whilst the people had seized at once the idea of the entertainment, and had enjoyed it like children.

It would be too long to repeat all their amusing adventures. The young officer laid on the ground, playing with Toby, for whom the fire and hot soup had done wonders, but listened with great eagerness to the strollers' tale. One night, after they had trudged across country for some hours, they missed the dog. They were almost heart-broken at the loss, and wandered about for three days and nights searching for him. That very evening, when it began to grow dark, they found him crawling along the road which they had passed by a week back, almost dying of hunger, and unable to eat the hard, dry bread, which was all that remained of their day's provisions.

'I do not know what we should have done without him, sir!' said the man.

It was not till it became grey with the coming morning, and the last star had disappeared, that we returned to the station. I felt a strange regret at parting with the two homeless strollers of my own country, with whom we had so suddenly become friends. They insisted on giving a short performance for the benefit of the French officer; but there was only just light enough to see it, and surely never had Punch and Judy performed under such extraordinary circumstances. The little dog was still too weak and ill to perform, but he gently wagged his tail. The officer was as much delighted as any small boy, and when it was over he forced on the men, who were unwilling to accept it, a sum of money. We then shook hands with them and separated, turning to look after them more than once as we went our different ways. L. C. F.

THE HEIR OF LINNE.

A Story from an old Ballad.

MANY years ago there lived a Scottish gentleman, called the Laird (or Lord) of Linne. He was a spendthrift, keeping always an open house, and never happy unless wild companions were feasting and rioting in his father's halls. In vain he was warned by those who deserved the name of friends, what the end would be; he was offended by their advice and they were angered by his folly, and so after a time they left him to his fate.

The heir of Linne at length had wasted all his ready money, and then he sold his lands. The buyer was a clever steward named John o' the Scales, who managed to buy the thriftless heir's estates at about one-third of their worth. According to the Scottish law the possessor of the land became the Laird of Linne. This title was one which John o' the Scales and his wife coveted very much.

And now a father's dismal forebodings were verified. The old man had suspected how his son would go on when the sod was above his head. 'When I am gone,' he used to say, 'thou wilt spend all. But make an oath, my son, that thou wilt not sell the lodge yonder, which stands in the lonesome glen.' The oath was taken and the young heir had the grace to keep it; and well was it for him that he did so, as you will see.

The old man died, and the young man soon began to waste the well-kept property, and when all was sold except the lodge his false friends began to look coldly upon him and to avoid him. The silly spendthrift used to say gaily, 'I shall never want; I have many friends; when all my money is gone I shall have nothing to do but to ask them for some. It will be then their turn to lend to me who have lent so much to them!'

But the heir of Linne soon found out his mistake. One friend was 'not at home' when he called; another was 'very sorry, but he had just paid away all his ready money.' A third was very cross, and turned him from his gate with a sharp word as an idle good-for-nothing. Poor heir of Linne! his eyes were opened at last, and like another we read of, he said, 'I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed;' and so he resolved to go and hide his face in the lodge which his father had made him swear that he would never sell.

It stood in a melancholy spot, low down in a deep, narrow valley, between two steep hills, which made it dark and damp. The heir of Linne unlocked the creaking door and entered. There was nothing to cheer his spirit, but quite the contrary: it was a place which made the blood run cold. It looked like a house where a man had been murdered, and which had been shut up and shunned for years. Outside the windows grew wild briers, ivy, and dark old yew-trees, and they brushed against the wall and shut out the light and the fresh air. Inside the lodge was as dreary as it could be. Mildewed were the walls and floors, damp and chill the stagnant air. It was like the vault below a church. Oh, what a home for the heir of Linne to come into! He stood considering what to do. He walked along the dreary passages, and at length he entered a room more dismal than any he had yet seen. The only thing he saw in the room was a rope, ready noosed and dangling from the ceiling! Above the window was a rude inscription, which, in the fading light of day, he had much difficulty to read. But he made it out at last, and it ran thus: 'O graceless wretch! have you spent all, as I thought you would? Well, I left you this rope as a trusty friend; let it hide you from disgrace and end all your sorrows and shame!'

'Yes, indeed,' said the unhappy heir of Linne, 'this is a trusty friend, and one most welcome!' So saying, he clambered into the window-sill, and putting his head into the noose sprang off, in hopes of a sudden and speedy death.

But events did not turn out as he expected. Instead of being hanged he fell violently on to the floor, where he lay awhile stunned. Collecting his senses he looked around, and found the floor covered with dust and cobwebs, amongst which there was a letter. He opened it and took from it a key. The key was golden, and the letter matched the key, for it told him of three chests hidden in a hole. He went to the place and found the chests, two of which were full of gold pieces and the third crammed with silver crowns and other coins. Here, too, where the chests were concealed, a wholesome text met his eye. 'My son,' it said, 'I set you free once more. Amend your life and give up your evil ways, for if you do not the rope will certainly be your end at last.'

The heir of Linne made a solemn vow then and there to abide by this advice to the end of his days.

As soon as possible he went to his old home, to see what John o' the Scales was doing. When he got there he found John was having a grand 'house-warming,' and several grandees of the neighbourhood were making merry at his board. The heir of Linne entered, no doubt to John's surprise, and putting on a rueful face, begged the loan of forty pence. 'Away!' screamed John o' the Scales; 'I'll never lend thee a penny!'

Finding John so hard-hearted, the disinherited heir tried what he could do with John's wife; but she was still more insolent. However, there was a guest at the table who said, 'He would gladly lend the heir of Linne forty pence, and forty more if he wanted them, for that he remembered the days when he was a right good fellow, who never spared his gold in doing acts of friendship. And, moreover,' said he, 'John o' the Scales, you should never deny this man a place at your dinner-table, for you got the estate dirt cheap.'

Up bounced John o' the Scales. 'Cheap? I bought it very dear! And here, before this company, I say it, that I will let the former heir of Linne have the land again for a hundred marks less than I gave him for it!'

'Done with you!' cried the heir of Linne. 'Be witnesses all ye who are present. Here, good John, is the money,' saying which, he pulled from under his cloak three bags of gold, and began to count out the sum upon the table.

John o' the Scales was too confounded to utter a word: all he could do was to watch the untying of the money-bags and the counting of the gold pieces. To think of this!

When the last piece had chinked against its fellows the heir of Linne said, 'Now, John o' the Scales, the gold is thine and the land is mine, and I am now the Laird of Linne once more.' Then, turning to the kind man who had proffered him forty pence, he said, 'Here, my good friend, you lent me forty pence, now will I give you forty pounds. Moreover, I will make you keeper of my forest, for I should be wicked indeed if I did not reward your kindness.'

We leave you to imagine the woe-begone expression which came upon John o' the Scales and his wife, and the groanings which this sudden revolution in affairs wrung from them. Crestfallen and sore, they were obliged to leave the house; and the last words they heard ere they quitted it were these: 'Good-bye, John o' the Scales, good-bye: and may I be an outcast for ever if I am again such a fool as to bring my lands into jeopardy any more through living the life I have lived in days gone by.' G. S. O.

The Heir of Linne finding the concealed chests.

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Chatterbox.

The Blind Man's Dog.

THE BLIND MAN.

—o—

A POOR blind man, who stands at the corner of one of the streets on the Paris boulevards, was driven from his post by the frost, and sought warmth in an adjoining shop; but he took the precaution to tie to his chair his faithful dog, who held his tin can for the pennies of the passers-by. The police admired the sense of the blind one, and did not put in force against him the laws against begging.

'ALL'S WELL!'

(*Continued from page* 349.)

CHAPTER XI.

I THINK for one minute my courage failed me. One had heard such dreadful things of the brigands, of their cruelty; and it was night, and no one knew of our absence from the ship except Bertie, and we were so far from home; but just then I heard Larry's voice close by, muffled and indistinct, but full of pluck still.

'Tom! I say, Tom! where are you?'

'Here, Larry!'

'Don't be afraid! They won't dare to do any harm, and my father will hunt us out anywhere, and wring their cowardly necks for them. What a blessing Bertie is not here!'

'Oh, I'm not afraid!' I answered boldly, for Larry's voice had wonderfully raised my pluck.

They had fastened my arms back at the elbows, so that I felt like a trussed fowl, and could not raise my hand to my head. But it was not at all painful, and I should not have been uncomfortable but for the heavy, stifling thing over my face, and I suppose Larry was the same.

We were left standing alone while the men talked together in low voices, and even laughed—I suppose at having caught us so easily. It was no use attempting to escape, blinded and tied as we were, for they had their eyes on us; and when I felt my way to Larry and tried to get hold of the knot which tied his arms, they saw the movement, and pushed me away; and very soon afterwards we all moved off.

I was between two of the brigands, and one of them had his hand on my shoulder to guide me, for I was still blindfolded. Larry was behind, and guided in the same way, I suppose. I tried to keep my wits about me, and notice the way as well as I could from the sounds; but I could not gather much except that at first our footsteps seemed to echo as if we were between walls; and the path was very rough and stony; and once my foot tripped, and I should have fallen, if one of the brigands had not caught hold of me and held me up. At any rate, so far they had not treated us brutally.

I heard a dog barking, and it sounded close at hand. Then I fancied it was not the same dog, as the barking seemed more dull and deep. Once I heard some footsteps coming up behind us quickly, and a wild hope of rescue sprang up in my mind, and in Larry's too, for I heard him give a shrill whistle and then shout. My hope soon died out, when I heard one of my guides speak quickly in Italian to the new-comer, and then both of them laughed, and we went on faster. We must have gone some distance, though I dare say not nearly as far as it seemed to me, when we stopped, and one of the men gave a low call: and then, as we stood still waiting, I heard distinctly the sound of water against the stones.

'Oh, Larry!' I called out. 'Where are they going to take us?'

'All right, Tom, they can't take us anywhere where the captain won't find us.'

I tried hard to comfort myself with this, but my memory was full of a story that the ship's chandler had told us only that very morning of a young Englishman being carried off by the brigands, and no one could find out where he was, or what they had done with him, till he was discovered on one of the islands in the Adriatic, after having been kept for more than a month knocking about in a wretched little cockle-shell boat off the coast of Sicily and Italy, and that his health was so ruined by the exposures and hardships that he had never lived to reach home.

Presently there was the sound of oars dipping in the water, and a boat grated against the landing-place: and then we were led down some steps—one, two, three, four, five, six—I counted them as we went down: the same number as those where we always landed from the *Larry's Luck*. It must be the quay, that was evident; but how bold of them to bring us there, where there were such lots of ships about, and where, at any moment, they might meet Captain Brady himself, or one of the crew!

But it must be getting late now, and everything was quite still, and there was not a sound to be heard: even the rowers spoke not a word, and we were helped over into the boat in perfect silence. We were sitting close together in the boat, and Larry gave me a nudge now and then, and said, 'All right, Tom! all right!' But I don't think he felt it was all right himself, as we were rowed on and on so silently.

There were four oars—I could hear that—and they all kept splendidly together, better than most of the Italians I had seen in the harbour, but no doubt these were old hands. Presently we could feel we were out of the harbour; there was more motion in the water, which showed that the shelter of the mole was gone. Almost directly afterwards we came up to a ship of some kind. It was a steam-ship certainly, for it was getting up steam, and evidently just ready to be off; and it was a ship of some size, standing high in the water, for one could tell that by the ladder we went up from the boat—not a companion ladder but a rope one.

When I reached the top, some one helped me down on to the deck, and the same hoarse voice said, 'Ecco! il capitano mio.' And then some one said 'Sh-h-h!' I was confused and giddy, and was only conscious that there seemed a lot of people about us, and once I fancied I heard an English voice, and once I thought I heard Larry say,—'Hullo—why—Tom!'

And then I heard no more, for I was pushed into some cabin, and I heard the door shut and locked on me. I felt my way cautiously round my prison, and found it was a small square place with some shelves at one end with tin cases on them, like the place near the pantry on the *Larry's Luck* where the steward keeps some of his stores. The ship was just starting, and before I had been there many minutes the screw began to turn.

Now we were off, and going at full speed, and as I thought how quickly we were leaving Palermo, and the harbour, and the *Larry's Luck*, and Captain Brady, and Bertie behind, I could not quite persuade myself that all was as right as Larry had said, and I could not help thinking how small a clue we had left behind us, by which Captain Brady could trace us out. If Larry had only been with me to make light of it and cheer me up; but I was alone, and my spirits got lower and lower as the screw turned and the ship went on.

There were sounds of footsteps hurrying about on deck above, and ropes being coiled, and distant voices, all so natural and like the *Larry's Luck*, till I could almost fancy sometimes that I must be in my cabin there, and all this brigand adventure a mere dream.

The cloak over my head deadened the sounds to me and made me wretchedly hot and uncomfortable, and at last, by a succession of wriggles, I managed to loosen it and get it off. I could not see much more when it was off, for there was only just a crack of light under the door, but I could hear much plainer and was much more comfortable. I heard the steps outside the door and saw a brighter light underneath it, and I got up from my seat in the corner and drew myself up, and tried to collect my wits and my courage to face those rascally Italians as an English boy should. But just then I heard above me on deck seven bells struck, and then came a sound which sent me flying to the door, banging against it as well as my tied hands would let me, and shouting, 'Let me out, I say! let me out!' with no feeling of fear or anger, but intense relief, for the sound that I heard was, quite unmistakably, quarter-master Burns' deep, powerful voice, giving the old, long, drawn-out call, 'All's well!'

CHAPTER XII.

Yes! it was nothing but a joke after all; and that was no ship of brigands, carrying us away prisoners, but the *Larry's Luck*, bound to Messina from Palermo. The door opened as I battered against it, and there were Captain Brady, and Larry, and the first mate, all of them laughing fit to split; and the steward and his boys, and a quarter-master or so in the distance, all on the broad grin; and I was too glad to be a bit angry; and besides, Larry had been a victim of the joke as well as myself, and he was laughing till it was quite impossible not to laugh too, just to see him rolling about, with the tears running down his cheeks, and choking, till the captain thumped him on the back, and gave him a good shaking to settle him.

The facts of the case were, that the lading being done sooner than was expected, the captain resolved to sail on Wednesday evening instead of Thursday morning, and he had just come on deck to tell Larry, when he overheard our plans, and thought he would play us a trick. Mr. Ray was only too pleased to lend a hand, and he went off on shore, and got three of the ship's chandler's sons to help, and they were delighted to play the part of brigands. In the meantime everything was got ready for the start, and the *Larry's Luck* weighed anchor and steamed out of the harbour soon after we went ashore, and waited just outside for us. The only fear was, that we should have observed her movements from the top of Monte Pellegrino; but I suppose we were too full of the brigands to notice anything. Another difficulty was, to keep it all quiet when we were brought on board; and as for Larry, he began to smell a rat even in the boat as we came from the shore; and when he was climbing up the ladder, there seemed something familiar in the feeling of everything. 'I don't think there is a splinter of the old girl that I don't know!' said Larry. But just as he was stepping down on to the deck he gave a stumble — Larry was a rare hand at tumbling about always — and Captain Brady, who was standing near, could not help putting out a hand to steady him. It was only a touch for a second, no more; but Larry knew his father at once, and shouted out, so that it was a wonder I did not hear it: but it was no use trying to take in Larry any more, and it was as much as they could do to prevent him cutting short the joke as far as I was concerned too.

'I should not have allowed it at all,' said Captain Brady, 'if Bertie had been with you; but I thought you and Larry could stand a frightening, and that it would teach you not to be up to any more such pranks, for you might have got into a nasty scrape: and indeed, it was nearly as much to take care of you as to frighten you that I sent the fellows. Bertie was in a tremendous state of mind when he heard us preparing to be off; so I was obliged to let him into the joke, though he did not half like it. Now, Larry, if you are going on laughing in that way, I'll have you put in irons. Be off, and turn in.'

(To be continued.)

AUTUMN.

THE gladdest sight in spring-time,
It is the first spring flower;
The fairest sight in summer,
It is the sunset hour.

What glad or fair hath autumn?
Is it the ruddy leaves?
Or when the reaper in the fields
Binds up the yellow sheaves?

The earliest flower of spring-time,
The summer sunset sky,
They are a gladness to the heart,
A beauty to the eye:

But autumn hath a fairer
Than all her flaming leaves,
And autumn hath a gladder sight
Than binding up the sheaves.

Autumn.

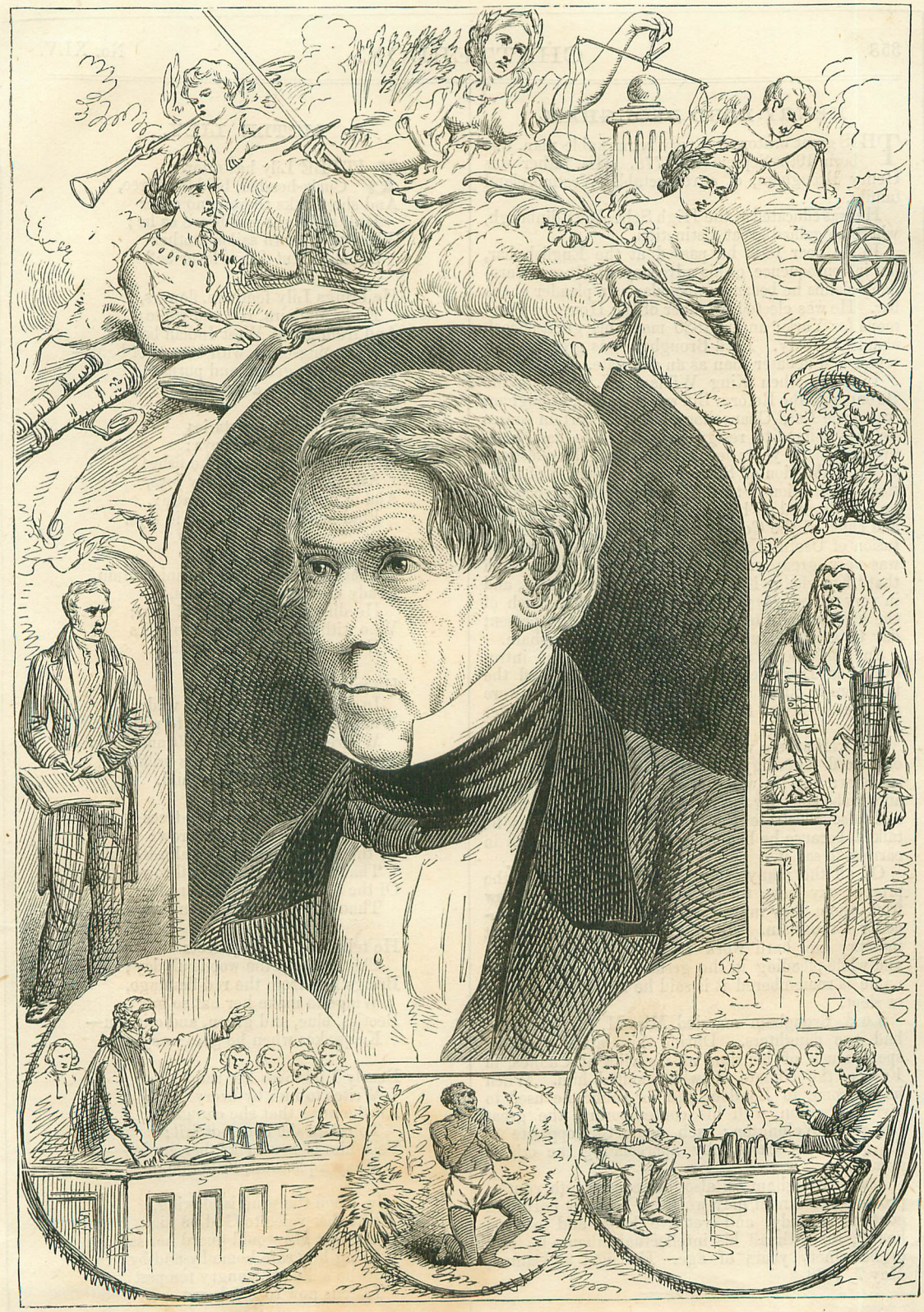
For autumn brings the gleaners,
  Woman and child and maiden:
A pleasant sight it is to see
  When home they turn well laden.

Soon as their task is ended
  Up from the fields they come,
Through shine or shower—no matter now—
  They bear their harvest home.

O children dear! O children!
  Read in my rhyme my meaning,
And when you reap in pleasant fields
  Think on the poor man's gleaning.

Think when you count up gaily
  The sheaves the reaper bindeth,
God counts the handfuls on the ground
  The humble gleaner findeth.

E. M. A. F. S.



Henry, Lord Brougham.

HENRY LORD BROUGHAM.

THIS great orator, and very remarkable man, was born 19th September, 1778. His father was Henry Brougham, of a respectable Westmoreland family.

He was educated at the High School at Edinburgh, where he gained great distinction.

In the year 1808 he passed at the English bar, but in consequence of his advocacy of Queen Caroline's claims he became unpopular as a pleader at the bar. He was elected Member of the House of Commons for York; and in 1830 made his great speech against Slavery. Lord Brougham was greater as an orator and debater than as an advocate.

In 1830, when King William IV. came to the throne, and the Reform Bill was proposed, Brougham was made Lord Chancellor; but from certain causes he was obliged to resign in 1834. He had, however, for many years devoted himself to the questions of the 'Abolition of Slavery' and the cause of 'National Education:' to the latter question especially he now devoted all his energies. He was Chairman, and chief of the Council for the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. And as an orator he was very great in debating on Lord Bacon's truth that 'Knowledge is power,' which he most ably, and in very varied ways, always enforced. For much of the advancement of school questions at the present day we are indebted to the great Lord Brougham.

In Parliament, many of the measures he introduced on Law Reform, Criminal Reform, and the like were in advance of public opinion, but they were afterwards carried through by other though not abler men.

His works were very numerous and various; they embraced Theology, Metaphysics, and most of the sciences: for he was a man educated at all sides, and his books show the fulness of a well-stored mind, and also illustrate the fact that he wrote as he talked, because he had something to say, and was in earnest to say it.

Of all the many examples that the youth of the present day have to guide them, we know of few from whom they may learn more than Lord Chancellor Brougham. He was an example of patient industry and hard work from his youth upwards; and while pleading in the great cause by which his name is remembered it is said he hardly ever rested or slept.

Lord Brougham married Miss M. A. Eden, and had two daughters. During his latter years he spent much of his time at his villa at Cannes, in France, the climate of which suited him. When he did come to London, and in public, he used to divide attention with his contemporary, the great Duke of Wellington; each being the opposite of the other, but each fully appreciating the other's greatness.

Lord Brougham is also an example to youths, proving how a man may work his brain by hard and continuous study, and yet live long, and in good health, for with all his intellectual labours he lived to be ninety years of age. He died at Cannes, May 7, 1868.

LITTLE LILY.

LITTLE Lily has a lover,
Curly-headed, bold, and free,
And she thinks there is no other
Half so bright and brave as he;
Who but her own sailor-brother
Should sweet Lily's lover be?

He brings Lily feathers, flowers,
From Madeira, red and white;
And from green West Indian bowers
Humming-birds, with breasts of light—
Topaz, ruby, green, and purple,
Sparkling like a diamond bright.

He tells Lily funny stories
Of the little negro boys;
How they swim about like fishes
All day long mid watery joys,
And in diving, bathing, floating,
Find more pleasure than in toys.

He tells Lily of the cruel
Shark that roams the Spanish Main,
Ready to devour poor sailors,
Heeding not their cries of pain;
Who within his jaws once tumbles
Never shall see home again.

He tells Lily of the flowers
In the far West growing wild;
Where the frost comes not to wither,
Where the wind blows soft and mild:
There the flowers in colours brilliant
Blossom for the negro child.

Of the orange-trees and fig-trees
By the water-side that grow;
Of the mighty spreading palm-leaves
That a shade refreshing throw;
Of the ferns and plants more lovely
Than our English gardens know.

He tells Lily of the parrots
Chattering in the woods all day;
Brings her, from the red flamingo,
Wings to make her hat so gay;
Beetles, blue, and green, and crimson—
Keepsakes when he goes away.

Dearly Lily loves her sailor,
Writes to him by every mail;
All the news that she can gather
To relate she does not fail;
Tells him of her books, her garden—
Many a pleasant, little tale.

Lily, when the wind is blowing,
Lifts her voice to God on high,
Prays that He would guard her sailor,
Bring him safe home by-and-by:
He who stilled the angry tempest
Listens now to Lily's cry.

Little Lily and her lover,
Long may they united be!
Gentle sister, tender brother,
She on land, and he at sea;
Loved, and loving one another,
Now and through eternity.

M. H. F. Donne.

ONE FAULT LEADS TO ANOTHER.

THE Archduke Stephen of Austria, sometime Palatine of Hungary, was noted by all who learned to know him during his many years' residence at the castle of Schaumburg, in Nassau, as a truly Christian man; one who had the strictest regard for truth and love of honour; who was a wise guide to lead back those who had strayed from the right way, who had a humane and benevolent heart, and, moreover, was a true friend to children and to the people. It was owing to his liberal opinions that he had fallen into the Emperor's disfavour.

This Archduke Stephen was now passing some time in quiet and retirement in a garrison town of Hungary.

The new Imperial commandant, who shortly before had arrived there, was soon greatly feared on account of his terrible severity. Among other things, he was stern with regard to the regulation (in which his predecessors had been somewhat lax) that officers might on no account go out in civil dress; and in many cases those who had acted contrary to this order had been punished with arrest and imprisonment; and yet Lieutenant von L—— was not restrained by these warning examples from one day transgressing this command.

The spring sun invited so temptingly to an excursion to a neighbouring village, that the young soldier, after he had returned from parade, exchanged his heavy and uncomfortable uniform for a light shooting-coat, and walked towards the village, where he safely arrived without meeting anyone to betray him.

But on his way home, when he had just reached the outskirts of the town, he beheld to his great terror the severe Colonel advancing towards him from the distance. What was to be done now? The lieutenant already felt the storm of the Colonel's fury bursting over his head. In vain did he look for some way of escape. None was to be found, while the dreaded chief approached nearer and nearer!

But stop! now a way of escape did show itself! Not far from him two gentlemen were walking together in friendly conversation. Quickly did the lieutenant press himself between them; amid many excuses related to them the cause of his embarrassment, and concluded with the request that they would allow him to walk between them and to continue on his way, joining in their conversation. This was kindly granted to him.

Now the dreaded Colonel approached, and the lieutenant turned his head aside, as if deeply interested in the conversation, towards his neighbour to the right, so that he did not observe the very respectful salute with which the Colonel greeted the three pedestrians. Thus he succeeded, as he imagined, in reaching the town unnoticed by the Colonel's sharp eyes; and because, up till late in the evening, he received no summons to appear before the commandant, he fancied that he was out of all danger. However, he had deceived himself. Very early next morning an orderly summoned him to appear before the Colonel. He followed with beating, anxious heart. Making up his mind to expect the very worst, he was not a little surprised when on his entrance the Colonel greeted him kindly, and then severely indeed, but not with the passionate fury which he had anticipated, put the question to him,—

'What have you to say to justify yourself for having yesterday acted contrary to my express commands?'

'Ah! excuse me, sir,' said the culprit, taking a little courage; 'excuse me this time on account of the following extenuating circumstances. Yesterday afternoon two relations of mine, who are on a journey, came to me and invited me to go out for a walk with them. As they were on the point of leaving this place, no time was to be lost: therefore I went with them just as they found me at home. I know that I have done wrong; but this time I entreat you to overlook my offence!'

'Indeed! indeed!' replied the Colonel. 'So those gentlemen were a couple of your relations?'

'Yes, truly they were, Colonel; very near relations of my dear deceased mother.'

'I am uncommonly glad to find that you have such very illustrious relations; and for the sake of those relatives I will this time pardon you. However, take care not to repeat the offence, for next time your relations will not be able to help you, and your punishment shall be all the more severe!'

The lieutenant now took leave of the Colonel with the question, 'Have you any more orders, Colonel?'

'Yes, certainly,' he replied, in a good-natured tone. 'You are to-day invited to dinner with His Imperial Highness the Archduke Stephen. Be sure to arrive punctually at three o'clock.'

At these words the lieutenant felt as if he had fallen from the clouds; but his surprise was still greater when he arrived at the Archduke Stephen's house, and at once recognised in his highness and his adjutant the two companions in his walk of yesterday, his two pretended near relations. With great embarrassment he approached his imperial host; but he encouraged him by a gracious reception, concluding however, with the serious words, 'Well, this time you got off easily enough; however, beware of a repetition of so disobedient and foolhardy an action, otherwise you will be imprisoned without pardon or mercy. Reflect, too, on your own conduct, and observe from it how one fault leads to another. Your insubordination caused you to tell a lie about your relations. Insubordination dishonours the soldier, but lying dishonours the man and the Christian.'

J. F. C.

"Take care not to repeat the offence."

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Chatterbox.

Looking at the ship on fire, through the fog.

'ALL'S WELL!'

(*Continued from page* 355.)

NEXT morning we arrived at Messina. As we came near the Straits we could see Etna, with snow on its head—to cool the fever inside, I suppose; and on the left of us the Lipari Isles, with Stromboli, smoking away, as Larry said, 'like a house a-fire.' As we turned into the Straits it seemed as if there were no passage through, but as if it were a great bay. The Calabrian coast seems so near to Sicily, and the Straits scarcely more than a good broad river, as if one might, with a good fling, send a stone across; but it is a mile and a quarter at the very narrowest, so it would want a Cyclops to give the throw. We could see Pizzo, where poor Murat was shipwrecked and shot; and the mountain beyond, with its top hidden in clouds, was Capo di Monte, where old Garibaldi fought, and had a bullet sent into him. Those rocks there were Scylla, but it does not look so desperately dangerous as Homer tries to make out; but Charybdis was able to give the head of the ship a twist, and make her quiver and creak, and the captain said it was often a great danger to small boats.

But I cannot tell you half we did at Messina. We spent four bright, sunshiny days there, bathing in the blue water, exploring the town, eating macaroni in the Trattoria, or dining-places; airing our Italian; skirmishing out into the country and up the hills on donkeys; bargaining in the market; and eating green figs everywhere. If you want to eat figs, go to Messina in October; and, Larry would tell you, you would never want to see a green fig again. But he did not much like them to begin with. We were bitten by mosquitoes, and pestered by beggars of dreadful dirt and deformity; we were cheated out of our lira notes in the shop, and worried out of our soldi by the children in the streets; and we laughed, and got fun out of it all. One thing we found out was, that the Sicilian time is counted up to twenty-four, and twenty-four o'clock is sunset, and one o'clock the first hour afterwards. They alter the clocks a little bit every week, to keep in with the sunset; but I should think time must be a very irregular sort of thing there. Then one evening we steamed away from Messina, leaving sea, sky, and shore, and distant Etna, crimson with the sunset, and early next morning we were at Naples. I cannot describe Naples: in the first place, because it is altogether beyond description; and next, because I have kept you so long on the way at Almeria and Palermo that you will be wanting to get home. The Italians have a saying, 'See Naples, and die;' but we all agreed that it ought to be altered to, 'See Naples, and live to go over to Sorrento,' not to mention Pompeii and Vesuvius, and going home afterwards. I think the Garden of Eden must have been like Sorrento, except for Vesuvius, which always seemed reminding one of death and ruin, with its threatening pillar of smoke rising up against the cloudless blue sky amid all the beauty and peace around it. But Sorrento is a jolly place, and no mistake! The lemon-gardens were what we liked best, with the bright green leaves and ripe lemons, bigger than my two fists put together; and then there were the orange-trees, with fruit and flower both out at once, and the olives, something like willow-trees, with fruit like small damsons. The olives were just ripe, and the people were gathering them, and we saw the press where they are crushed to get the oil out of them. Then there were the vines, flinging their graceful branches everywhere; and little chattering streams, making their way to the sea through deep clefts in the rock, fringed thickly with maiden-hair fern, like the one mother has in the drawing-room at home. And here, there, and everywhere, were little green lizards flashing in the sun. And then there was such a blue sky above, and such a blue sea below, so smooth that the white sails of the fishing-boats are reflected quite clearly for ever so far. And opposite is Naples, white and shining in the distance, reminding one of the Celestial City in *Pilgrim's Progress*, if one could only forget the smells, and the beggars, and the dirt, that meet one at every turn.

I must not stop even to tell how we went up Vesuvius, and how Larry nearly fell into the crater, and how we came down as black as tinkers from the ashes and dust. And I think I had better not even mention Pompeii, or else I shall not know where to stop. It seemed almost profane to talk, and laugh, and sing in those silent streets, which were so busy and full of life 1800 years ago, when the sudden end came to it all. When I saw the ruts worn by the wheels in the pavement, and the footprints, and the wine-shops and bakehouses, and the fountains and mills, it brought to my mind those words, 'They did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.' And I could not help glancing up at Vesuvius with the puff of smoke, and wondering if another destruction might not be lurking there, ready to break out as terribly and unexpectedly as before. I can't think how people can like to live close to the foot of the old monster, and even to build a town just over poor, buried Herculaneum! I think it would give me the nightmare to sleep at Resina; but I suppose they get so used to it that they do not think of the danger. And I must not tell you of the *table d'hôte*, full of greedy Germans, or of the enormous quantities of macaroni the Italians consume, each swallowing three times as much as we should have in England for a whole dinner-party, and then eating as much dinner as any one else, or rather more, as if nothing had happened. I should like to tell you about a hundred things, but I must not stop, and can only advise you to go to Naples yourself if ever you get the chance; and I hope you may have half the fun that Bertie, and Larry, and I did.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOMEWARD-BOUND! leaving Italy behind us and going west, and the saloon clock being too fast every day instead of too slow. But in spite of all the fun, and change, and enjoyment, that was becoming a

thing of the past, it was very pleasant to be going home. The home letters at Palermo, Messina, and Naples, had been most delightful, and we had read them quite greedily, and had gone over them again and again to make sure that we had not missed a word. We had not forgotten either to write, and Bertie had even tried to keep a log; but there were such large gaps in it, that he gave it up in despair, for, after all, we should be able to tell it all when we got home. And then on board ship, one day is so very much like another that sometimes there seemed hardly anything to describe; and, on the contrary, when we stopped at a port, there was so much, that one did not know where to begin or how to do it. However, we were to go straight home from Naples, so, as I said to Larry one night, there will not be much variety now, except in wind and weather, till we reach home. We had been three days gone from Naples when I said this, steaming along at a fine rate, with a slight east wind and a small sail up to help us along, but the next day we certainly got a variety in the way of weather. It was a thick fog, yes, even in the Mediterranean! a thick fog like a blanket all around us. We went at half-speed and sounded the fog-signal every now and then. Everything on deck was dull, and damp, and clammy. The captain was on the bridge nearly all day and night too, for we might have run into another ship before we could see it coming. Towards the afternoon it got a little clearer, but the captain shook his head and said 'it looked uncommonly like two or three days of it, and a fog at sea was one of the worst things he knew of.' He would rather have a good honest gale, for then you know what to be about, but there was no tackling a fog anyhow. It was not quite so bad in the open sea as in the channel, where there was a constant danger of collisions. He told us how he was getting home once in December, and they had reckoned quite certainly on being in port before Christmas Day. Just as they got to the mouth of the Mersey on Christmas Eve a fog came on, and there they had to stop almost within hail of home. There had been no preparations for Christmas dinner, they had counted on having their old English beef on shore, or at any rate, fresh from shore, and other provisions had run short, so that there was nothing but salt junk and biscuit on that disappointing Christmas Day.

He was telling us this down in the saloon about four o'clock, while Larry, Bertie, and I were making a great brew of lemonade with the lemons we had brought from Sorrento; the first mate was on watch, when all at once one of the quarter-masters appeared at the door of the saloon. 'The first mate would thank you to step on deck a minute, captain, to take a look at something as he can't make out on the starboard quarter.'

The captain got up at once to go, and Larry swallowed his lemonade in a hurry. 'Come on, Tom and Bertie,' he said; 'come and see what's up. Hullo! quarter-master, what is it?'

'Well, sir, that's what we can't altogether get at the rights on, along of the fog.'

'Come on!' said Larry; 'here's a go! Perhaps it's the sea-serpent.'

So up we went expecting to see something wonderful, but there was not much to see but the fog still, though the captain and first mate, and some of the sailors were all looking hard in one direction, where the fog was slightly crimson.

'Well! that *is* queer!' said Larry.

'What is?' said I. 'I suppose that red is the sunset, isn't it?'

'Get along!' said Larry: 'the sun is generally in the habit, at sea, of setting in the west, if, indeed, it cares to go aloft at all on such a foggy day as this: but perhaps you're accustomed to see the sun set in the north on land. Besides, it won't be setting for another hour yet, unless it has taken cold from the fog and gone to bed early to put its feet in hot water. But—I say!—look there!'

For as he spoke the fog lifted slowly like a curtain from the sea, as if on purpose to let us see the dreadful sight that lay behind it; and as it lifted, first the calm, oily sea, and then the sides and decks of the *Larry's Luck*, and then the masts and funnel turned blood-red with the glow that came through. I do not think I have ever seen so awful a sight or so grand a one. It was a ship on fire. When the fog cleared we were nearly abreast of her, and she was, Larry said, nearly two miles away on the larboard side, though she looked much nearer than that, as things always do at sea. Great volumes of flame and smoke were pouring out from between her decks, and these were reflected on the fog that still lay behind and around her, though for the time the space between us was clear. Almost before I had realized what it was, I heard the captain altering the course of the vessel, and we were running towards her, seeing every moment more clearly the awful strength of the flames, and the crowd of terrified creatures on the forecastle. They were trying to lower a boat, but as we came towards her one of the masts came crashing down right across the boat, smashing it all to atoms, and we were near enough to hear the cry that went up. Then our screw stopped. We were within half a mile of her, and it was not safe, the captain said, to go any nearer. All the time, our men had been busy making ready to lower one of the large life-boats to send to the rescue, and as soon as we stopped they gave a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether, and the boat swung round on the davits and down into the water as easy as anything. There was nothing that Bertie and I could do, and I had learnt that generally it is the most useful thing to keep out of the way and not interfere. Larry, too, stood by us, not saying a word, though he was ready and able to lend a helping hand if it was wanted. This was the first mate's boat that was being launched, and the list of the crew of each of the boats hung up in the wheel-house, and I had often read the names. Quarter-master Burns was one, and the purser another, and they took their places as orderly as possible; but one was missing. Mackenzie, one of the seamen, generally called Mac, was laid up from having made too free with the fruit at Naples, and the captain looked round to see who he should put in his place. Larry said never a word, but I saw him give a look that was very expressive of his wishes; and the next moment the captain nodded to him, and he was down in the boat in the empty place, with the oar in his hand, before one could hardly draw breath. Oh, how I should have

The Lads' visit to Pompeii.

liked to go! and so would Bertie too; but Larry could pull an oar with any one, and was as strong too. The captain knew what he was about, and would no more have sent me than the cat from the engine-room.

The boat was off directly, the oars going like clockwork: but just as they pushed off Larry looked up to where Bertie and I were, leaning over the gunwale, and laughed and sang out, 'All's well, Tom! all's well!'

Ever since that night at Palermo when those words had brought such tremendous relief to my mind, I had taken a great fancy to them, and liked to wake in the night and hear the watch; and I was quite sorry when we were in port, and they did not call it out. Larry used to laugh at me about it, and every night when we turned in he would bang at the end of my berth and sing out, 'All's well, Tom! all's well!'

(To be continued.)

SHOOTING A RAPID.

A RAPID is, as its name imports, that part of a river where the bed is much inclined, or slanting, and where the water, on that account, moves onward with very great rapidity. Shooting a rapid is very unlike shooting a tiger, but both are dangerous pastimes. A canoe,

with several men in it, is whirled along by the racing water, and the lives of all depend on the nerve and ability of *him* who steers the frail bark along its perilous path. Were it to run foul of a rock—and rocks are generally plentiful—it would capsize immediately or be smashed to pieces, and all the crew be hurried into certain destruction. Such accidents must, and do, happen sometimes; yet in spite of that, men will still make the venturesome journey.

But light and manageable canoes are not the only craft which shoot the rapids of great rivers. Steamers of considerable size, freighted with many precious souls, will race along the rapids which here and there occur on such rivers as the St. Lawrence; and sometimes they are brought into contact with rocks, and utterly wrecked in an instant. In this sort of voyaging most haste is surely worst speed. There seems something desperately unwise in shooting rapids. A late traveller relates his feelings as he shot down the great river St. Lawrence, when, under the guidance of a strong and steady hand, the steamer shook and quivered under the shock of the hissing waters.

He says: 'The rapids just above Montreal are really dangerous, and I am not ashamed of confessing that I should decline to shoot them again. We passed, on the very edge of the reef, the bones of a wrecked steamer which had come to grief there at the first voyage in the present year; and the evening of the day after we passed through them safely the steering-chain of the steamer snapped, and the passengers had to be transferred, in open boat in the dark, from the vessel to the shore. I asked the captain what would have happened if the steering-chain had snapped one minute sooner. The answer was,—"Every soul on board would have been smashed to atoms."'

And why do men run such risks? Simply because the racing river will bear them on its impetuous bosom very quickly. Its hasting waves will save toil, lighten trouble, lengthen out time; and for such advantages men will imperil their lives. It is no uncommon thing. Shakespeare speaks of the soldier plucking the bubble reputation out of the cannon's mouth; and the good things of this life are in like manner snatched by many others from places equally as dangerous. The trapper, the fisherman, the sailor, the diver, the miner, all brave death in earning their daily bread. Of course danger is inseparable from every occupation. Whenever we enter a railway-carriage, or ride in a coach, we incur a certain amount of peril; but it is our duty to minimise the risk, and never on any account to hazard our lives, unless the voice of duty is plainly heard requiring us to do so. Then, holding our lives cheap is true nobility. G. S. O.

WHAT IS VIRTUE?

A STUDENT asked Dr. Archibald Alexander the question 'What is virtue?' His simple and admirable reply was, 'Virtue consists in doing our duty in the several relations which we sustain in respect to ourselves, to our fellow-men, and to God, as known from Reason, Conscience, and Revelation.'

A CURE FOR GREEDINESS.

FROM Africa's shores in a fine, noble ship,
Young Tommy was working his way;
'You shall be my small servant,' an officer said,
'My clothes you can brush, and can shake up my bed,
And then you'll have nothing to pay.

My breakfast or lunch from the steward you'll bring,
And execute errands with care;
And if you are handy, and willing, and clean,
Do just as you're told, not in mischief are seen,
Of nice scraps you may pick up a share.'

So Tommy proceeded to bustle about,
His kind master's will to obey,
Did as he was bid without trouble or doubt,
His uniform brushed, or his breakfast set out,
In the very best possible way.

But one great fault he had which it pains me to tell,
In good living he found too much joy;
And so to procure the nice things he loved well,
Without being found out and disgraced, it befell
He would often much cunning employ.

Now the chief (Tommy's master), was not one to care
For rich puddings or anything sweet;
And so, when requested by Tom to prepare
For his breakfast some dainty or extra good fare,
Or for luncheon some delicate treat—

Figs, prunes, or sweet biscuits, or raspberry jam,
Cakes, raisins, or marmalade puff,
All ordered by Tom with voice meek as a lamb,
The steward would wonder, while Tommy would cram
In secret, and greedily stuff.

But, alas! one fine day Master Tom was found out,
And his roguery made all too plain;
And although he proceeded to sob and to shout,
That as long as he lived there was not the least doubt
He would never be naughty again,

His master, determined to try once for all
If his greediness could not be cured,
Shut him up one whole day in a cabin so small
It would never have held him if he had been tall,
And where puddings could not be procured.

But in it was a window, through which he could see
The ship's larder most temptingly spread
With cakes, sweets, and jellies of every degree,
All ready for breakfast, or dinner, or tea,
While he'd nothing to eat but dry bread.

The ship-boys, beginning with laughter to shake,
Kept asking which sweet he liked best?
'Did he think that a tartlet of jam he could take?
Or perhaps he might manage a cocoa-nut cake?
And no doubt the kind cook a plum-pudding would make,
Or of light, tempting pastry, a delicate flake,
Or a jam roley-poley, or fry a beefsteak,
Or a few apple-puffs would most willingly bake,
If he didn't quite fancy the rest.'

All this was, of course, most unpleasant to hear,
And, like Tantalus, much he was tried;
So hungry and thirsty, in sight of good cheer,
And exposed to rude ship-boys' unmerciful jeer,
Not to speak of the blow to his pride.

But I think he felt also some honest regret
For his cunning and greediness past,
And resolved that he would not the lesson forget:
So we'll hope he will never experience yet
Any punishment worse than this last.

M. H. F. Donne.

THE BOY WHO KNEW BEST.

—o—

'WHERE are you going, Jack?'

'Fishing, father.'

'Oh! and what do you expect to catch?'

'Why, fish to be sure, father.'

'Oh!'

Jack had been told many times over that he would catch no fish in that spot, but he thought he knew best. So Jack went down to the river and seated himself on the bank, with his legs dangling over the stream, and threw in his line and waited.

The water-lilies lay among their green leaves at his feet, looking up at him as if they were saying, 'Do you really mean it, Jack? Do you really expect to catch a fish?'

'Yes, I do,' said Jack, pettishly; answering what they seemed to say, whether they said it or not; and just then down went his float under water.

'There!' cried Jack, in triumph; and in his eagerness he gave his rod a very sharp jerk.

Snap went his line.

That was provoking! It must have been a big fish. Jack felt angry at first, but presently he felt proud to go home and boast that he had hooked such a big fish that it had gone off with his line. There was no doubt that he knew best after all.

The next evening away he went again to the same spot, and again he seated himself with his legs dangling over the water.

'Where are you going, my boy?' his father had called after him as he set out.

'Fishing, father.'

'And what do you expect to catch to-night?'

'Why, another big fish of course, father.' Jack chuckled over this somewhat saucy answer.

As he sat upon the bank watching his float, there lay the lilies still, gazing placidly up into his face.

Down went his float.

'There!' Jack jerked his rod more warily this time; then, as the great fish seemed to pull hard, he slackened; and then, when it grew quieter, he began to haul in his line.

Snap went the line in another moment.

Jack knelt on the bank and leant over the water in dismay. The lilies were nodding at him quite in a state of agitation. They seemed to be saying, 'I told you so, Jack; I told you so!' just as his grandmother did whenever he got into trouble.

'You didn't! you never said a word about it!' cried Jack, affronted at what they seemed to say; and then he shouldered his rod and marched off home.

'Another big fish, my boy?' said his father, with a knowing smile which Jack did not quite like, and *did* not at all understand; but his brothers and sisters thought him a most wonderful fisherman, and that made amends; and he felt that he knew best after all.

It seemed, however, as if Jack had had sport enough, for he did not go down to the river the next evening, nor yet the next, nor yet the next; the truth being, poor boy! that he had lost his lines and his hooks, and could not get any more.

By-and-by, a little while after this, Jack's father was sent with some other men to look to some decayed posts, and the old planking which supported the river bank. Jack went to look on. He felt rather a great man down there where he had done such wonders.

One old post was dragged out of the river and laid upon the bank, that a new and sound one might be put in its place.

'What's this?' said one of the men; for in the soft part of the wood there was a fish-hook, and a piece of line attached to it.

Jack's father smiled his knowing smile again, and bending down cut out the hook; then he tossed it to Jack.

'Look here! what's this?' cried another man, presently, as in casting aside a mass of lilies and water-weed he found it all bound together with a tangle of string, and something sharp pricked his hand.

Jack's father looked knowing once more; cut the line and tossed it to Jack; upon which Jack grew very red, and ran home.

One day, not long after this, Jack was giving himself some airs to his mother. 'That is not the way to light the fire,' she had said; but Jack thought he knew best.

'Come hither, my boy,' said his father, 'and listen to me. There was once a lad who knew better than any one else; he knew he could catch fish down there in the bend of the river amongst the weeds; so he went, and what do you think he caught?'

Then Jack hung his head, and lighted the fire in his mother's way; for he knew now what you and I guessed long ago, no doubt—that his two big fish were, the one an old post and the other a water-lily.

E. M. A. F. S.

MORE WORDS IN CREATION.

Cater	tarn	crane	cour
cote	tic (dol)	inter	coin
con	tine	rot	coiner
ore	ton	rota	tonic
roan	tone	nicer	roe
nitre	torn	antic	o'er

The Boy who knew best.

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Chatterbox.

The Italian Letter-Writer.

THE LETTER-WRITER.

—o—

PEOPLE in England are apt to regard the writing of letters as rather a private matter, and if we are so unfortunate as not to be able to write them for ourselves, we generally betake ourselves quietly to the help of some near relative or neighbour. In Naples, however, the world is not so particular. The professional letter-writer sits openly under the arcades of the principal theatre, with a notice up mentioning how clever he is at translating French as well as writing Italian, and thither flock the servant-girls, the labourers—all, in fact, who have something to say on paper, and no power to say it themselves. Mr. Scribe has a spare chair, and there his customer sits and dictates the letter, and when it is written the very clever gentleman in spectacles reads it over aloud, and Maria or Lucia calls out, 'Beautiful! it is just what I wished to say;' and a few sous are laid on the table, the letter is transferred to the owner, and out she goes into the sunny streets to post it. This is letter-writing in Italy. H. A. F.

GRANDMOTHER'S LOVERS.

A Biography.

THE humble life I am now to write, by the desire of my children, may seem, at first sight, to have an odd title; and so, in fact, it has: but the subject of it is an odd personage. My eldest boy says, very truly, that he often hears himself and his brother and sister called lovers of bread and jam, and why should there not be lovers of grandmothers? It does not much signify who I am, myself, or what is my rank in life, since I merely write for one who cannot herself hold the pen; yet as some people feel curious to know who a writer is, I will just say that I am only a country doctor, living in a retired village, with a house full of children and a good wife to work for them. I get small reward for my labour; and at the end of the year it is a great cause for rejoicing to my wife and myself if we find a sovereign still in our possession. This, however, is not much to the purpose of what I wish to write upon. I therefore go on with my story, and tell how I first became acquainted with grandmother, taking care to insist on the fact that she is not mine, nor my wife's, nor my children's grandmother, nor related to anybody here, so far as I can tell.

On the particular afternoon when I was first introduced I had to visit one of my patients, a farmer in the neighbourhood. I often take one or other of my elder children with me when the patient lives near at hand, and so I told my eldest boy to put on his cap and come with me. This was sure to give him great pleasure, for he is a crony of one of the farmer's sons, and both have resolved to go to sea, intending some future day to be admirals at the same time!

After waiting for my son to find some wonderful boat which he had made for his friend's approval we started at a brisk pace. It was a cold winter's day, and neither of us had greatcoats to put on. Very bleak and bare the country looked; but running kept us warm, and we are used to go out in all weathers.

We reached the farm in a short time, where I found my patient expecting a visit from me, and the sight of his blazing fire made me wish I could transfer it to my own grate at home. Had I but hinted such a wish, the kind-hearted farmer would probably have sent me a load of wood next day, or perhaps a ton of good coals.

We talked on, while the two little boys were busy with their boat, and another child sought out some newspapers, which they kindly lend me from time to time. Presently there was a slight noise at the door, when my boy and his friend jumped up, saying, 'There is Grandmother!'

'Let her come in, boys,' said the farmer. 'We shall not have her much longer with us, for the mistress says she must go away, and not hang about the house any longer.'

'But who is Grandmother?' was my question. 'I never heard of her before!'

The reply was, 'She is a poor friendless creature, who put herself upon us because she had nowhere else to go. The boys call her Grandmother, for they think she is old enough to have a dozen grandchildren. The mistress is tired of her, and she must go—to the workhouse, I suppose;' and the father laughed, with a want of kind feeling as it seemed to me.

After a little talk at the door, maybe to persuade Grandmother to enter when there was a stranger in the room, the two boys brought her in; and I could not help smiling myself when I saw how utterly unfit she was to be the inmate of a workhouse.

'Has she really no friends at all?' I asked.

'None,' said the farmer; 'for I believe she was driven away from her last abode by the bad treatment she met with.'

'But can she do nothing to earn her own living?'

'She does in a way, and is much liked by the children; but, you know, she is dumb.'

This news made me still more sorry to think of the workhouse for her. An alms-house would surely be better for one so neat, so gentle, and, withal, so handsome in spite of her old age.

Though a poor man, I flatter myself that I am not hard-hearted, and I had almost resolved to give the poor creature shelter, when my little boy said in a whisper, 'Oh, father, let us take her home!'

I asked the farmer, 'Do you really think you must send her away?'

'I do not see that she is in the way,' he replied; 'but then I am not much in the house, you know.'

I promised my boy that, if mother approved, we would find a corner for her at our fireside. I was so sorry for the friendless one, and glad to have a case to watch that had been always dumb but never deaf.

My consent gave great pleasure, for I found that all my children, in their many visits to the farm, had long ago known Grandmother, though she had never been talked of before me. I had but few hours at home, and then was busy teaching the elder boys, as I could not afford to send them to school.

Of course we had to consider how to feed a new inmate, but my wife was won over at last, and hoped that Grandmother, though dumb, would help to amuse the little ones, who were all fond of her. My wife found out that the farmer's sons had often teased the poor creature, and we made a little speech to our own boys, saying that if we did give a home to Grandmother, they must always be very kind to her, and never forget that she had no friend to speak up for her, and could not complain for herself.

'Oh, but, mother,' said one of the little children, 'though Grandmother cannot talk she can make a great noise when she is vexed.'

'Then, my dears, all of you will take care that I never hear that noise.'

'After all,' said I, 'she may not choose to stay with us; but if she does, we must try to make her comfortable and happy.'

So poor Grandmother came to us, and very soon made herself at home in our small and quiet chimney-corner. A far better place for her than in the great kitchen at the farm, where the large family often took care to show her that she was in the way; while my little flock, under the guidance of their good mother, loved the helpless one, who also loved and trusted them.

Grandmother was never tired of walking about the garden after the children, and would sit quiet beside them under the chestnut-tree at lesson-times, when now and then a small hand would gently touch her face or stroke her soft grey hair.

It was to me a curious and amusing sight, as I sat resting after my day's labour and long walks, to watch my children at play, with Grandmother in the midst of them, as happy as the rest, and pleased with the chips of wood spread about while the boys were at work with their boat-building.

Another reason why Grandmother found herself happy with us was, that we did not keep any dogs, which were the terror of her life while she lived at the farm. With us, Grandmother could go about with no cause for alarm; and if any of the dogs from the farm came after their masters to my house, it was pleasant to see how the little children would cluster round poor Grandmother to prevent her from seeing the dogs, lest they should make her afraid.

The farmer's sons were rough and rude, and thought it good fun to frighten a poor helpless creature by making their dogs bark at her; but I took upon myself to forbid that, and my boy bravely told his friend that if he dared to be so cruel he would never give him another boat, nor help to make one, nor even go out to sail a boat again in his company.

I will confess that I became as fond of Grandmother as my wife and children, and often laid down the newspaper, though I had but little time for reading it, to observe how she sat in winter, gazing at the falling cinders; or in summer, spent her time in watching the sparrows and robins, as they hopped on the lawn. I used to wonder how she got through the long days, with nothing to do; and my children would laugh and say,—'Now, Grandmother, you see how busy we all are; why cannot you learn to do something? Shall we teach you to read?' And then they laughed again at her grave face, and way of getting up to walk off, and sit on the bench under the chestnut-tree, watching the birds, as before.

This quiet life went on for some time, until one day a child rushed into my room with, 'Oh, father! Grandmother is climbing up the tree, and there is a great ugly cat going up after her!'

I believe that my tale is not clearly told, unless the reader finds out from it that Grandmother was our favourite tabby cat, and the 'ugly one,' we fear, was one of her lovers, for she was never seen again. Most likely she got out into the woods, and came to grief in a trap set to catch any of the creatures that prowl about for young birds in their nests, or for the patient mother-birds sitting on their eggs.

WONDERS OF NATURE.

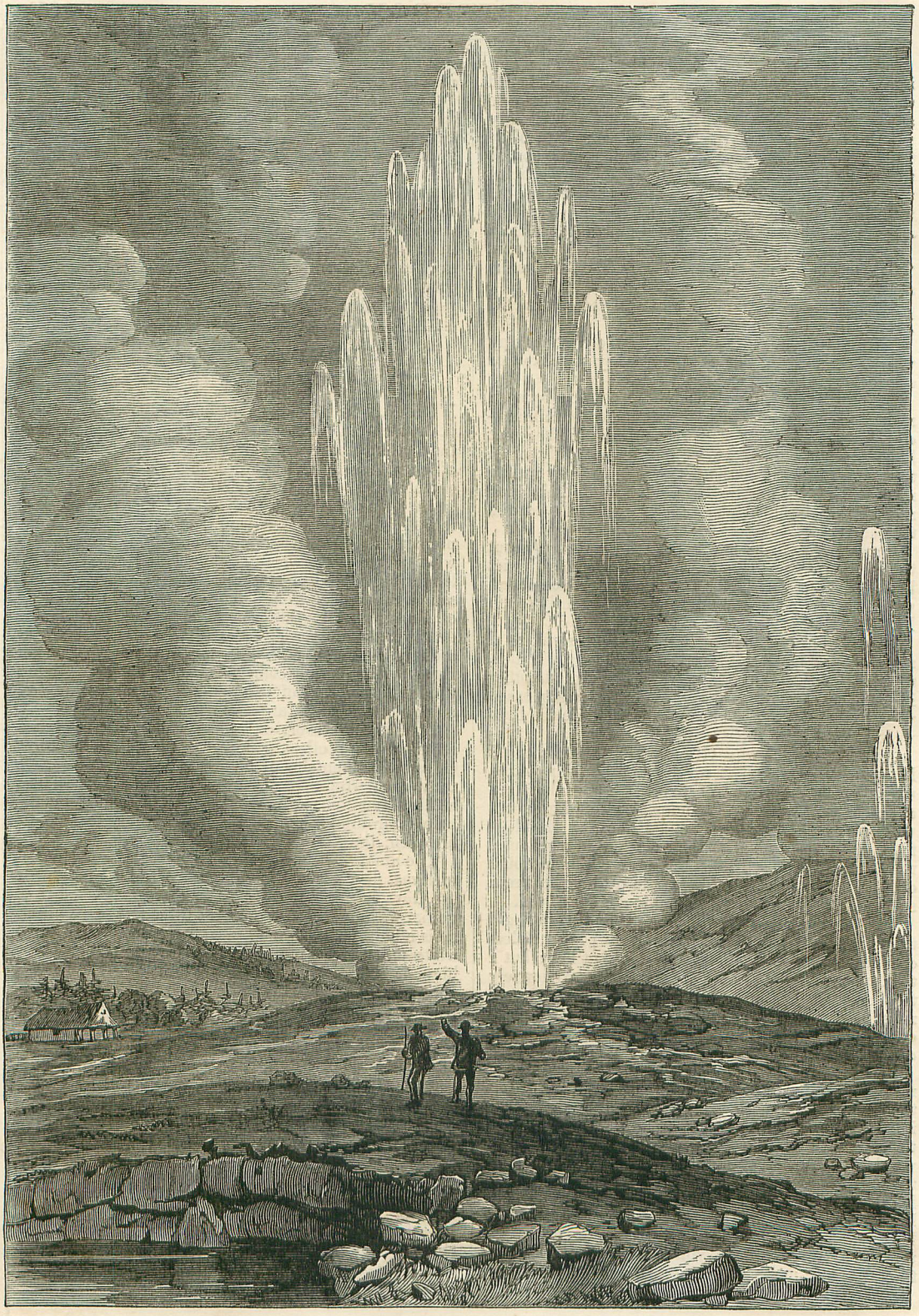
THE GREAT GEYSER, ICELAND.

ICELAND is a barren and rugged country, which volcanic powers have upheaved from the bottom of the sea. It is a heart-shaped island, of considerable size, but, owing to its inclement climate, it is only thinly inhabited; the whole population being not more than that of many a second-rate English city. It is said that the island was not peopled at all until the middle of the ninth century, when certain Norwegians, unable to endure any longer the cruelty of Harold Harfagra, went forth to seek a new home. They were directed, by the finger of Providence, to this remote spot, and here their descendants remain unto the present day: but they are diminishing, it is said, in numbers; so that perhaps Iceland may become once more a desert place. Contagious leprosy of the worst kind, and obstinate disease of the lungs, are said to abound.

There is, however, one sight which Iceland presents, and no other country. We allude to the Geysers, or fountains of boiling water, which offer a truly wonderful appearance to the beholder. The artificial fountains at Versailles and Chatsworth must hide their diminished heads beside their Icelandic brethren, the Geysers.

The amazed beholder stands among ice and snow, with vast fiery peaks around and above him, watching the Geysers, forty or fifty of which are crowded together within the space of about three miles. Whilst he is admiring the dignity of the great geyser, a tall white pillar of boiling water, seventy or eighty feet high, it suddenly yields, collapses, lessens, and disappears within its caldron cave. But ere long it bounds upward again, though this time its column is but seven or eight feet high. Once more it sinks into nothingness; and the next moment, as if angry at its late failure, it shoots up into the air as high as ever, 'sallying from its den,' in the poet's words, 'like a deathless giant.'

When you realize the fact, that there are some forty or fifty of these fountains continually rising and falling, to the treble of their own plashing waters and the deep bass of strange underground rumblings; and when you picture to yourself the smoking white cones above, and the ghastly wastes of snow and ice around, you feel that you must be in the presence of one, and that not the least, of all the Wonders of Nature. G. S. O.



The Great Geyser, Iceland.

NORTH AMERICA.

O WILD North land, where the keen winds blow!
O wild North land, with its endless snow!
Where the Indian hunters shoot and fish,
And the black bears roam—ah, me! I wish
To that wild land I could go!

From England's shores, with its fields so green,
I wish to go where the wolverine,
And the Arctic fox, and the beaver dwell,
That know how to build their huts so well,
And the red musk-ox is seen.

I wish to see where the marmots sleep
All winter long, in their holes so deep,
So warm and snug in their mountain home,
And the merry squirrels by thousands roam,
And the Red men their meetings keep.

Where they shoot with arrows that never miss,
Through the freezing air that fly and hiss,
And strip the skin from the fierce black bear,
To make into coats for themselves to wear.
Hurrah for a land like this!

I should have to cross the Atlantic wide,
And the great North American forests beside,
And the Mississippi, so broad and deep,
And the prairie that stretches with endless sweep;
And then, and then, for the ice and snow!
Where the black bears roam and the keen winds blow;
Oh! when I'm a man, I will if I can
To that wild North country go.

M. H. F. Donne.

'ALL'S WELL!'

(*Continued from page* 364.)

CHAPTER XIV.

NOW we watched the boat as it sped over the water, going from us so fast, and yet seeming so long in reaching the ship! I was scarcely conscious of anything around me, for my whole heart and senses seemed to be in the boat, that showed so black against the lurid light behind it. On the burning ship, another boat was being lowered on the other side, and we could hear the pumps going still, though the flames grew fiercer every moment, and were spreading very quickly, as if they longed to devour with their fiery jaws the little space that still remained clear at the forecastle. It seemed so strange to see the water all round in such volumes, and yet they could not put out the fire, which was a mere spark compared to the great sea around it. The boat passed out of sight behind the burning ship, and we watched, breathless and silent, to catch the first sight of it coming back again. Captain Brady was having the other boat lowered to send off; but there was some difficulty about it, and it was not ready when Bertie gave a cry, 'There they come!' and our first boat made its appearance round the stern of the burning *Firenze*—for that was her name—distinct even yet in gold letters on her bow among the smoke and flame. The boat was coming much more slowly than when she went, heavily laden and very deep in the water. 'There are women and children,' Bertie said; 'they will be wretched, and cold, and frightened! I'll go and help the stewardess get some of the berths ready for them, poor things!' And he went off, while I stood still watching the crowded boat on its way.

It was so full that one could not distinguish the rowers clearly, and it must have been awkward work pulling. Just then the captain came and stood by my side. He was looking through his glass at the boat, and when he put it down I saw his face looking queer and anxious, but I did not know the cause of it till the boat came up close alongside. It was the captain himself who stood at the top of the ladder to give a hand to the women, and to take the children in his strong arms. They were every one of them Italians, and their faces were pale and their eyes wild with fear. They were all utterly helpless, like frightened sheep: and Bertie, and the steward and stewardess, took them in tow, and drafted them off out of the way. But the first words the captain said when the boat came near made me nearly as helpless as the poor Italians.

'Ray,' he said, 'where is he?'

For the boat had come back safely, but Larry was not there.

'The other boat is just behind us,' answered the first mate; 'and he's in that.' But no boat was to be seen.

When all the rescued people were on board, the first mate told the captain that the *Firenze's* boat had been properly launched, and was ready to start when they came away, and it had in it all the remaining crew and passengers and the captain, and that Larry changed places with one of the men whose wife was screeching after him in Mr. Ray's boat. But it was in vain that we strained our eyes through the dusk, for no boat was to be seen coming from the *Firenze;* and the time had been creeping on all this while without our noticing it, and had brought twilight before one expected it; and the fog was drawing round us again, rolling wreath upon wreath, to add to the thickness.

'I can't think what keeps them,' old Ray said, scratching his ear; 'they were all ready to be off when we were. But I'll go back at once, and see after them. I was loth to let the lad change.'

'All right, old friend!' said the captain. 'Never fear but——'

But at this moment there was a tremendous report, that made the *Larry's Luck* tremble from stem to stern and rock on the water, and scattered morsels of burning and charred wood and cinders all about our deck, and far beyond too, I expect; and in that second the burning ship was utterly gone, with the flames, and the lurid smoke, and the crimson light on the misty sea; and directly after, down came the fog, as if the last scene were over and the curtain had fallen. The fire had reached some gunpowder or something explosive in the cargo, and she had been blown to atoms. I saw the captain turn ghastly white, and catch hold of the gunwale to steady himself; but it may have been merely from the shock, for he was quite himself the next minute, trying to calm the excitement of the Italians, who had rushed up from the cabin at the explosion, and were screaming, and wringing their hands, and making the clatter that foreigners generally do. They could none of them speak a word of English, and there was only the steward on board who could speak a few words of Italian; so it was hard work to pacify them. The first mate was half-way down the ladder into the boat, when the captain stopped him. 'Hold hard!' he said; 'it's not a bit of good going after the boat in this fog. It's much more

likely to find us than we are to find her, and you might only lose the ship yourself.'

Any one who had seen the two men for the first time then might have thought that old Ray felt it even more than the captain, for he seemed quite beside himself, saying it was all his fault, and that he was an old fool to let Larry get out of his boat; and I think I quite agreed with him, and wondered, in my sick, miserable heart, why he had not stayed behind himself rather than let Larry do it. He quieted down after a bit, and went about his business; but he kept out of the captain's way, as if he were guilty, though the captain never blamed him by word or look. Lamps were lighted all over the ship, in hopes that some gleam might pierce the fog, and reach the wanderers on that dark sea; the fog-whistle was sounded every moment or two, and rockets were sent up at intervals; but the night came on, intensely dark, and no boat came — no sound through the dreadful silence. Bertie had been busy with the rescued people, but he found me out at last on the quarter-deck, and tried to persuade me to go down and have some tea.

'Oh, Tom!' he said, 'you're not really frightened about Larry, are you? He will come back—he is sure to come back; every one says so. There's no real cause for fear.'

But I could not drag myself away. My clothes and hair were wet with the fog, and I was shivering with cold and wretchedness; my eyes were smarting, and sore with straining through the darkness, till I seemed to see sparks and white shapes moving everywhere, and my ears seemed deafened with the silence. Then Bertie went off to bring a cup of coffee up to me, and some one else came and stood by my side, and a kind hand was laid on my shoulder.

'Tom,' said the captain; 'Tom, my boy, this won't do! You won't do *him* any good by this. Now look here! I'm to be on the bridge all night, and you go below, and have some coffee, and eat something. No! I'll tell you what, Bertie shall bring us both some coffee and stuff up here, and we'll have it together, and then you shall just turn in; and be up as early as you can to-morrow, and come up and help me keep a look-out.'

How good he was! I knew every mouthful nearly choked him—that he grudged every look that was not out into the darkness where Larry was; and yet he sat there with me, and ate some bread and meat, and talked quite cheerily. When we had finished he said all at once, after a bit of silence, 'Tom, can you call to mind that part where it tells about a gale on the sea of Galilee?'

'Yes,' I said; 'I remember.'

'Well, it says "He was asleep" in the little ship. That was a bit of comfort for poor seamen, depend upon it. He did not forget any one. And often and often in a bad storm, when I'm half inclined to say "We perish!" I think of it, and I say to myself, "He's on board the *Larry's Luck* just as He was on that little ship, and by-and-by He will arise and rebuke the winds and the waves;" and sometimes I can almost fancy I hear Him saying, "Why are you fearful?" Tom, you and I won't be fearful to-night, for He's in the boat with Larry; and where He is, all's well. Good night, Tom!'

CHAPTER XV.

How sound I slept that night! tired out with sorrow, for I did not even hear the fog-whistle or the rockets; and, oh! how bad it was to wake in the morning and know that Larry was not on board. It was scarcely light when I got up and dressed, and made my way up on deck. The captain was on the bridge, and as I came up, I thought he looked older and more worn than he used to do.

'The fog is clearing off,' he said. 'Please God, we'll have a fine day!'

And so it was, clear and fine, with a pale, blue sky and a smooth, rippling sea; but oh! I almost longed for the fog, for then one might fancy that Larry was close at hand, though we could not see him; but now one looked all round in vain, over the bright smiling water, for miles, but could see no boat far or near. The captain lent me a pair of glasses, and I looked through them till my eyes and heart ached past all tears. Then the breakfast-bell rang; it seemed quite cruel and unfeeling that all should go on just as if nothing had happened, but the captain put his arm through mine, and went down, taking me with him. A good many of the *Firenze* people came in to breakfast; they were mostly poor Italians, but the captain said they might come into the saloon while they were on board; so the table was full, and Larry's seat did not remain empty. The captain ate some breakfast and made me do the same, and then we both went back to that weary watching and looking for what we could not see.

(*To be continued.*)

SOMEBODY'S DARLING.

WARMLY tucked in little bed,
Somebody's darling lay;
Golden curls around her head,
So tired after play!

Little cheeks like roses red,
Sweet laughing eyes of blue,
Smiling mouth—you might have said,
Bright angels round her flew.

Tiny hands are crumpled tight
Under her rosy cheeks,
Mother softly shades the light,
That through the window streaks.

Slowly treading up the aisle,
Somebody's darling moves,
With downcast eyes and happy smile,
And near her all she loves.

Sun-rays stream through painted glass,
A happy bride is she;
Around her stand her village class,
Somebody's darling to see.

Hush! O hush! tread softly now,
Angels are in the way,
White and still as untrodden snow,
Somebody's darling lay.

Weep not, weep not so for her,
To her can come no ill;
Surrounded by God's loving care,
And—Somebody's darling still.—E. R. G.

"Sun-rays stream through painted glass,
A happy bride is she;
Around her stand her village class,
Somebody's darling to see."

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Chatterbox.

"She sings a song or opera;
Will laugh by turns, or cry;
And understands the bugle calls
As well as you or I."

BEN FRANKLIN.

ADOPTED by the *Franklin's* crew,
There is a dog named 'Ben,'
The plaything and the humoured pet
Of officers and men.

They took her from the dirty street,
A little mangy pup,
And sought, with skill and patient care,
To wisely bring her up.

At first their efforts seemed in vain:
Her hair refused to grow;
She tumbled down and broke her leg,
Which was not *comme il faut*.

But still, with unremitting zeal,
Her friends continued kind;
Her back with sulphur oft was scrubbed,
On dainty food she dined.

The doctor set her leg in splints;
She bathed in waters pure;
And this, with careful nursing,
Resulted in her cure.

Once more her coat is sleek and soft,
She walks and runs with ease;
And though her movements lack in grace,
She never fails to please:

For every day unfolds to view
Her intellect most keen,
With charms of temper unsurpassed,
And rarely to be seen.

And then her aptitude for tricks
Is freely owned by all;
She leaps a foot, and sits a chair,
And plays a game of ball.

She sings a song, or opera;
Will laugh by turns, or cry;
And understands the bugle calls
As well as you or I.

She lives in everybody's mess,
From admiral's to boys',
And knows the hours when they dine,
And has in each a voice.

And who so brave as little 'Ben,'
When rats are fancied near?
How eagerly she looks for them,
And feigns to have no fear!

But when a rat does venture forth,
'Ben' quickly gives him place,
Retreating with the utmost speed
To seek some safer place.

Beauty and courage are denied
To little 'Ben' by fate;
But she has many a noble trait
Their loss to compensate.

Thy bright brown eye and knowing face,
Thy thousand winning ways,
And e'en thy stumpy little tail,
Command, dear 'Ben,' our praise.

Thus education triumphs o'er
The accidents of birth,
Transforming ugly little 'Ben'
Into a dog of worth.

And may she be, in future years,
As happy as of yore,
And neither mange nor broken leg
Disturb her evermore.

And when she dies, and we with tears
Regret we cannot save,
We'll borrow Jonson's epitaph,
'O rare Ben!' for her grave.

A DIGGER'S STORY.

CHAPTER I.

'WELL, lads and lasses,' said Uncle Ben, 'so you wish to hear about the diggings, do you?'

'Of course we do!' said John, James, Thomas, Ellen, Robert, and Lucy.

'You went out poor,' said John, 'and you came home rich.'

'Rich enough to buy Jack a pony,' said James.

'And Jim a watch,' said Tom.

'And Tom a six-bladed knife,' said Ellen.

'And Ellen a silk dress,' added Robert.

'And Bob's got twenty pounds,' put in Lucy.

'That's because I'm Uncle Ben's nephew and godson, too,' said the fortunate Robert.

'And what has little Lucy got?' asked her big-bearded, good-humoured Uncle Ben, catching her up and smothering her with kisses.

'Nothing yet,' answered Lucy; 'but I'm going to marry Bob, and he will give me some of his twenty pounds.'

'Bless your simplicity!' said Uncle Ben. 'Did I really forget Lucy? That must not be. Here's a "fiver," which has never yet been in a greasy pocket-book. Look how white and crisp it is, Lucy.'

Lucy looked rather blank at the 'fiver,' and thought it a poor present; but Jack, Jim, Tom, and Bob, poured such a chorus into her ear, that Lucy began to think that her 'fiver' was a fairy's wand, which could turn pumpkins into coaches, and rats into sleek carriage-horses. She ran off in high glee, and laid her crisp bank-note on her mother's lap.

Mrs. Stone smiled at her little daughter, and locked up the treasure in her strong box.

When Lucy got back into the parlour, Uncle Ben was seated with his little friends around him. Lucy was taken on his knee, and he began his story:—

'I need not tell you about my voyage. Our good ship made Port Michael safely, and I, with a man named Hughes, lost no time in starting inland toward the mines. We had to go through a forest, much wilder and bigger than our English forests; but as others had gone before us, we were able to find our way, the trees being blazed.'

'Does that mean set on fire?' asked Robert.

'No, Bob,' exclaimed his eldest brother; 'it means the trees were marked with a hatchet; does it not, Uncle Ben?'

His uncle nodded, and went on.

'At night-fall we came upon a stranger, bound for the same diggings. We made a great fire, for wood was plentiful, and we did not know but what prowling beasts might annoy us. At length we got clear of the forest, and had to cross a wide grassy plain.'

'How did you find your way then?' asked Tom.

'Oh, by a blue peak of a curious shape,' said Uncle Ben. 'That peak was our guide, and we could see it many a mile away. At length we reached the diggings, and we toiled and moiled week after week in very hot weather, and found next to nothing. At length my friend Hughes fairly gave up, and declared that he was a fool to have come so far for nothing.

'"Never say die," said I, quoting the famous raven in *Barnaby Rudge*, "Polly, put the kettle on, and let's have tea."

'"Well, I've no objection to a cup of tea," said Hughes, as he wiped the sweat off his brow; "but we've no Pollies here to boil our kettles. Every man is his own cook, housemaid, washerwoman, and shoeblack." So saying, Hughes put the kettle on the fire, and we made such a tea as only hungry diggers can make.

'"Stone,' said Hughes, "I shall go back to civilised society, and find some employment there. I hate this dig, dig, pick, pick, and nothing coming of it."

'In a day or two Hughes retraced his steps to Port Michael, where he knew he could earn nine or ten shillings a-day, which was better, he thought, than digging for nothing. We had a farewell supper, with about a dozen diggers, with whom we had scraped acquaintance. The next morning Hughes departed. We shook hands, and I said, "Look for me at Port Michael next year. I shall be driving a pair of greys in a carriage, with my coat of arms on the panel. My motto will be, 'No Stone unturned.'"

'"More likely it will be Ben Stone returned," laughed Hughes, "to beg a slice of boiled beef at the well-known eating-house of the rising citizen, Inigo Hughes."'

'Inigo! What a funny name!' said James. 'I suppose he meant Indigo?'

'Not a bit of it,' said his eldest brother. 'Inigo Jones, you know, was a great architect.'

'Quite right, Jack,' replied his uncle: 'but we often did call him Indigo, for all that.'

'Still it is a funny name,' said Ellen. 'Did Inigo Hughes get on better at Port Michael than at the diggings?'

'You shall hear,' answered Uncle Ben.

CHAPTER II.

'My perseverance and sobriety,' continued Uncle Ben, 'made me to be looked up to by many of the diggers.

'I felt sure there was a fortune to be made somewhere under the blue peak. Fortunes had been made there, and fortunes would be made there again; but not without patience, labour, and thought. I did not go to work in the blind way of some folk, but I studied geology in my spare time.'

'Whatever is that?' asked Lucy.

'Ah, I thought some of you would inquire,' said Uncle Ben. 'What's cooking, Lucy?'

'Why, of course, every one knows that! It's making paste, and roasting meat, and boiling potatoes, and lots of things. It's getting dinner ready, Uncle Ben. But what has cooking to do with finding gold?'

'Why, Lucy, just as a cook has to study the art of roasting, and boiling, and baking, so the geologist studies the earth. He knows gold and silver are hidden somewhere, and he has to find out where they lie. He learns there are certain signs which point, as with a finger, to the precious metals. The cook knows when the leg of mutton is roasted enough; does she not, Lucy?'

'Yes, by its looking nice and brown.'

'Well, Lucy, I kept looking at the earth and the rocks, to see what they were like. I had not yet earned more than enough to buy food, and sometimes I felt down-hearted; but I remembered my motto, "No Stone unturned," and took fresh courage. One day I had better luck than usual, and not feeling very well, I resolved I would have a holiday for a week. I got a friend to look after my things, and, with a good supply of food I started off into the mountains on an exploring expedition. Hammer in hand, I tapped the rocks; I forded the streams barefoot; I sifted the sand; I tasted the earth.'

'Was it like roast mutton?' asked the roguish Lucy.

A kiss was her uncle's reply.

'I wandered on and on, until at length I came to a place where I noticed what seemed to me very favourable signs.

'"There ought to be gold here," said I to myself. And there was; enough to make many men rich. I could not help saying, as I looked at the stream which murmured by,—

> "Where Afric's sunny fountains
> Roll down their golden sand."

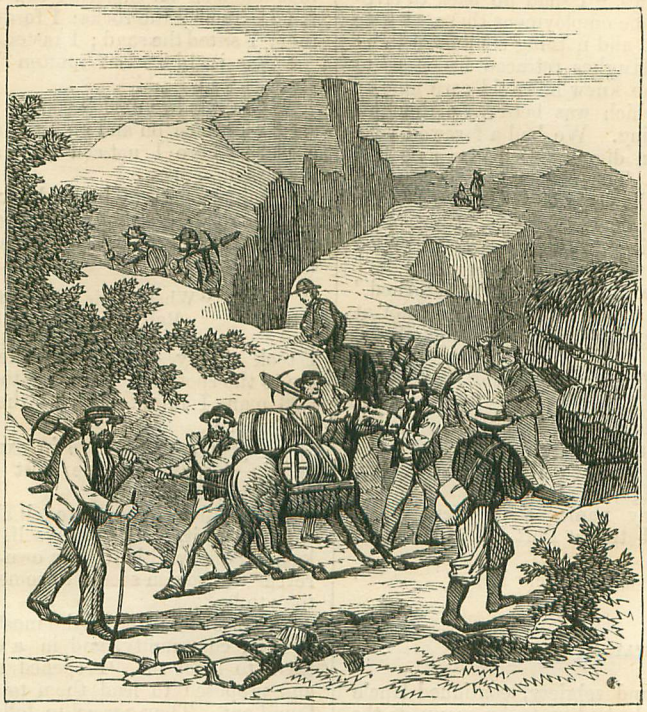
I took off my cap, and thanked God for guiding me to the spot, and I prayed that, if I were to be a rich man, I might be none the worse, but all the better for it.

'I spent a day or two in examining the district, and in deciding on the best way of turning the treasure into use.

'"It will be no good to tell all those fellows down there about it," I said to myself, "and I ought not to keep all this wealth for my own advantage. I must reveal the golden secret to some; but then, who are they to be?"

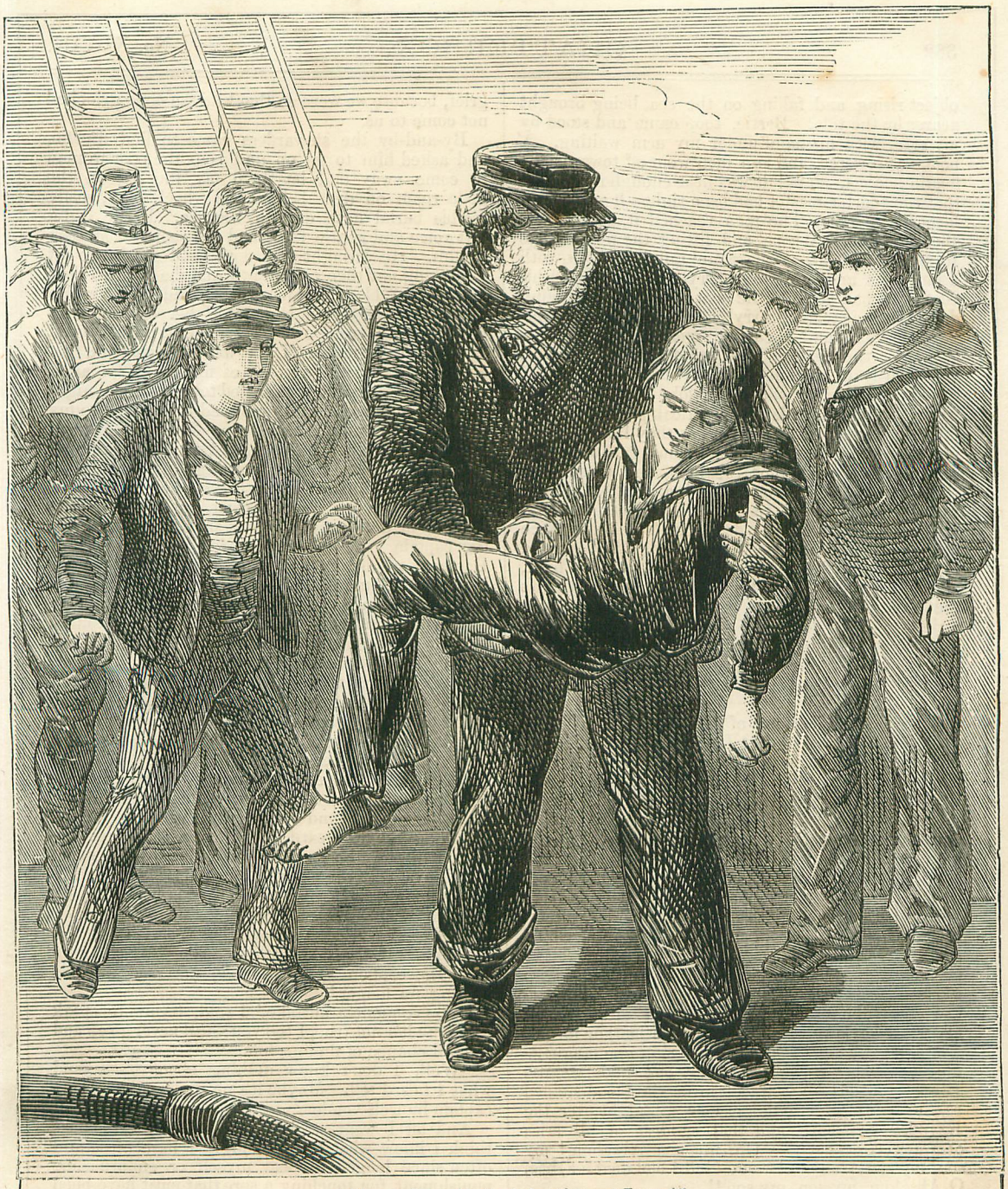
'I chose about ten of the most sober fellows in the digging community, and in a day or two I invited them to meet me. I opened my views guardedly, and proposed to lead them to the wild spot I had found out. They agreed to follow me, and in about ten days we set off to "the Hills of Hope," as we called them. Two asses—one the most restive brute on the face of the earth—carried the bulk of our necessaries; and we quickly left our old diggings

"We made a great fire, for wood was plentiful."



one dark night. In virtue of my discovery I was to receive, when we separated, a quarter of the whole proceeds. It was not thought too much, seeing I might have had all. After some small difficulties (the chief of which was owing to the restiveness of Clara, who required at times two men at her head, and a third to shove behind), we reached the Hills of Hope, and found our sunny fountains were rolling down more golden sand than we knew what to do with.'

(*Concluded in our next.*)



"It's not Larry!" I cried; "it's not Larry!"

'ALL'S WELL!'

(*Continued from page* 375.)

IT was about the middle of the morning (for the leaden hours crept on their slow way in spite of our trouble) that something came in sight. It was the captain who saw it first, and it was a minute or two before I could make it out with my glasses; but it was no boat, so I scarcely looked at it, for what hope could one get from something floating on the sea? But all at once there flashed into my mind, that if it could not bring hope it might bring fear, and my heart stood still with terror at the thought.

'What is it?' I asked the quarter-master, who stood near.

'It's a body, Master Tom, fastened to a spar or something.'

And then I asked no more, and only watched that

object rising and falling on the sea, being brought nearer by the tide. Bertie, too, came and stood by my side, with his hand under my arm waiting. A boat was lowered, and two men went off towards the floating object. Yes! it was near enough now to see that the quarter-master had been right—it was a body lashed to a spar. The men reached it, and we saw them untying the rope and lifting the poor lifeless form into the boat. Young, and tall, and slight, with a blue shirt and trousers (Larry had thrown off his coat as he had got into the boat), long arms hanging down (we used to call Larry 'The Windmill,' his arms were so long), and then the men laid him in the bottom of the boat, and we could see him no more. How gently they handled him,—almost reverently! Could it be Larry, who was a joke with every one, whom every one played practical jokes on, and laughed at and teased as much as they loved? Only yesterday Larry had been complaining, half in joke, of 'the cheek' of two of the men, and these were the very two who were bringing the body back with such sorrowful respect. Numbers had collected round me on the deck, but I did not notice them, and when the boat came alongside I started forward to receive him; but a hand kept me back, and Burns said, 'Hold hard, Master Tom! there's the captain.' And I stopped. Who had so great a right as he? He came through the people standing about as if he did not see them, and bending over held out his arms; and the two men lifted up the body and gave it to him, a tall, long-limbed young fellow.

And then I gave a cry of intense relief. 'It's not Larry!' I cried; 'it's not Larry!'

'Larry?' the captain said, looking up; 'I never thought it was. I should know him a hundred miles off, I think. No, thank God, it's not Larry.'

What a sad world this is, where the very thing that can bring gladness to one and make him say, 'Thank God for His mercy!' brings despair to another, and breaks his heart! Even as the captain said, 'Thank God!' one of the Italian women rushed through the group of lookers-on, and caught the dead boy almost roughly from the captain and looked into the white, still face. And then she gave an exceeding bitter cry, and sat, rocking him clasped in her arms, with his face pressed to her breast, pouring out her sorrow in rapid, passionate words. It was all in Italian, and yet I am sure we all understood what she meant. The grief of a father or a mother is in one language all the world over, which every one understands: Eve over dead Abel, Jacob over the blood-stained coat of many colours, the cry at midnight over the Egyptian first-born, and that saddest of all cries over a worthless son,—'Oh, my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!'

And so we all drew away and left her to her grief. She was only an Italian peasant-woman, rough and ignorant, and her boy only a common sailor; but even old Ray coming up just then in a hurry, drew back and took off his cap in the presence of those mighty sovereigns, Death and Sorrow, before whom all earthly princes must bow. And Bertie and I went away to say our 'Thank God!' in our hearts and to one another, feeling all the more sorry for her grief, because we were so thankful the same grief had not come to us.

By-and-by the stewardess came to find Bertie, and asked him to go up and coax the poor woman to come away and let them lay the boy in the little room on deck behind the wheel-house, ready for his burial next day in the sea. Bertie had a soft voice and gentle face, and the poor woman took to him. He brought her down and got her to eat something and then to lie down, and she went to sleep murmuring blessings in Italian, and holding his hand. I think trying to comfort her distracted his mind a little from our own great anxiety; but as for me, I could not forget that Larry was not found, and that every hour made the chance of finding him smaller. And so that weary day dragged to an end, and night came once more, and I was glad to creep off to my berth and forget it all in sleep. No news the next morning; another clear, bright day, but bringing nothing in sight. In the morning the young sailor-boy was buried, the mother looked her last on his still face in cold, dry-eyed grief, and then he was sewn up in a hammock with a shot at his feet, and the captain read the service for him. She was a Roman Catholic, I think; she had her beads in her hand all the time, but the solemn sound of the words seemed to comfort her, though she could not understand them, and she held Bertie's hand all through. I had never been at any funeral before, and it seemed all very impressive and beautiful to me; all the more because I thought of Larry all the time, and felt those words might never be said for him; and there was a tone in the captain's voice, as if he were feeling the same, and were thinking of the time when the sea will give up her dead.

When it was over and the passengers and crew dispersed, I sat on the quarter-deck in the warm sun, feeling dull and stupid, and half sleepy; but some words I overheard, said by one of the quarter-masters to the other, made me start up. 'The captain says,' says he, 'when I've got our bearings, we must be off on our course, as it won't do to be stopping about any longer.'

'What?' I cried. 'What's that you're saying?'

'Well, Master Tom, I was telling Martin here what the captain said just now, that it's no good waiting no longer.'

'You've made a mistake,' I said, trying to speak calmly; 'it's not true, I tell you: he'd never go on and lose all chance of finding him.'

'Well, I don't know nothing about it, beyond what I heard tell. Maybe it's not true. There's the captain himself yonder.'

And off I went straight to the captain. I don't think I knew what I was doing. I have often and often since longed to beat myself or endure some punishment for touching a sore that must have been so much deeper even than mine, but I do not think I knew what I was about.

'Captain,' I burst out, 'Captain, it's not true what they're saying? You're never going on without Larry?'

It was about twelve, and he had been taking an observation, and when I spoke, I saw his hand, with the sextant in it, draw up with that expression of suffering that some hands have sometimes. I won-

der he did not strike me; or if he was too good for that, that he did not treat me with silent contempt, but he turned to me as kindly and gently as ever.

'Tom,' he said, 'the ship is not my own, the cargo is not mine, the time is not mine. I'm responsible for it all, and, please God, I'll do my duty.' And then he turned away, looking eagerly, hungrily over the great empty space of sea, and added, more to himself than to me, 'He who gave His dear only Son knows what it is!'

I shall never forget his face just then. I think Abraham must have looked like that when he and the lad went up into the mountain on that dreadful errand, 'both of them together,' or when he took the knife to slay his son. I did not say another word, but I crept away to my cabin and locked myself in, and crouching down, stuffed my fingers into my ears that I might not hear the screw begin that was to take us from Larry: but it was all in vain, the very first turn vibrated through every nerve in my body, and I threw myself into my berth, sobbing 'Good-bye, Larry! good-bye!'

Presently, Bertie knocked at the door. I would not let him in at first, but when I did I felt how selfish I was. Poor little Bertie! the fellows at school used to call him 'Larry's baby.' His face was very white, and his eyes heavy and swollen. We sat a bit silent side by side: it's a comfort sometimes just to rub shoulders with anyone who is quite as wretched as one-self; and by-and-by I put my arm round his neck and wiped his face with my handkerchief.

'Tom,' he said, in a whisper, 'let's ask God to send him back to us.'

'I can't, Bertie,' I sobbed; 'I can't; I'm not good enough. I am too miserable.'

And then we knelt down side by side, and at first I could only just cry, and sob out 'Oh! Larry! Larry! Larry!' but after a time, just the kneeling seemed to comfort me a little, and though I do not think I said a word, it seemed just like laying the trouble 'before the Lord.'

I did not see the captain again that day, he kept in the deck-cabin most of the time, or paced the quarter-deck, but we heard that we were running for Almeria, where we should land the crew and passengers from the *Firenze*, which had been on the way from Naples to Almeria when the fire broke out, and we were likely to reach it about the middle of the next day, which was Sunday. Bertie and I turned in very early that night, and in the middle of the night I woke myself and Bertie by crying out, 'Larry! Larry!' and heard up above on deck the watch calling, as if in answer to my cry, 'All's well!'

Ah! Larry, dear old Larry! is all well with you, *indeed*? Are you out of the storms of this troublesome world and into the great harbour of refuge, the haven where you would be? And into my mind came the question of the prophet to the bereaved mother, 'Is it well with the child?' and her answer, 'It is well.'

CHAPTER XVI.

NEXT day was Sunday. The captain came down to breakfast, and looked and talked much as usual: only Bertie and I could see the change, and old Ray, and perhaps a few others who knew him well. I think I had cried all my tears away, and yet I found I could not look into his face with dry eyes, or trust myself to meet his look when he spoke to me. He was so good to the poor people, too, though they almost seemed to have been rescued at the cost of Larry's life. He always read the service on Sunday, but this day, as we were getting towards Almeria, and there were preparations going on for the arrival, the service was not held; and besides that, I do not think his voice would have held out through the reading, for it broke and trembled now and then when he spoke. All the morning Bertie and I sat on deck, watching the Spanish coast, as we drew near the bay where Almeria lies. It was all so closely connected in our minds with Larry, that we could not bear to point out to one another landmarks that we recognised, or to recall adventures there that seemed now such ages ago. There it was, white, and hot, and sunny, and dusty as ever! I even fancied I could smell the peculiar smell that hung about the streets. The Italians were all in a bustle, and chattering like a parcel of monkeys.

'I think I shall go below, Bertie,' I said. 'I can't bear it.'

'How bad it must be for the captain, Tom!'

And just then he came to where we stood. He had his glasses in his hand, and from time to time he took a look at the town, and the hills, and the shore, without any look of interest on his sad, set face. As we came nearer one could make out the quay, with groups of people standing about — lazy Spanish labourers, bullock-waggons, mules, and all the rest of it, that seemed so deeply interesting the last time we were there, and now were hardly worth looking at through the glasses. The captain did not seem to feel this; his glasses were fixed on the quay, as if he could not take his eyes away. I glanced up at him, and as I looked, I saw him start, and quiver all over, and he caught his breath with a choking gasp; and then such a change came over his face! I could only see his mouth, for he held the glasses up still, and Captain Brady was not a handsome man at all; but just then he looked almost beautiful, with a look I fancy we may all have some day in Heaven, when we meet after long parting. 'And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him.' There was no need to ask what it was; I knew it without a word. God had given Larry back to us. He was there! he himself, standing waiting for us on the quay! The captain did not speak, but put the glasses into my hand, and pointed, with such a look, to the quay. I don't think I could have made him out from there, even if my eyes had not been dim, and my hand trembling; it needed a father's eye to see at such a distance and be sure; and so in a minute I gave the glasses back to him, and laid my face on my arms on the gunwale, too happy to speak, too happy to look, too happy to do anything but cry. Then we stopped, and I heard them say the pilot was coming on board; and the next moment, just below me, I heard Larry's own voice, just as when he left us, saying, 'All's well, Tom! all's well!' And I looked down with my wet eyes into Larry's face, with eyes as wet as mine in spite of his grins.

(*Concluded in our next.*)

"Captain," I burst out, "it's not true what they're saying?"

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Chatterbox.

The meeting of Larry and his father.

'ALL'S WELL!'

(*Concluded from page* 383.)

THE crew were cheering like mad, waving their hats, and shouting till the Italians must have thought them a set of lunatics, and all pressing to shake hands with Larry; but they would not touch him till his father had had the first long grip, and they all hung back and looked away while the captain met him. Not much to see, or hear either. It would have seemed strange and cool to any one who did not know how heart speaks to heart, and love to love, without ever a word.

'Hullo, Larry!' with a tremble in the voice.

'Hullo, father!' with an answering tremble. And that was all.

Then after the handshakings were over—after just a word to Bertie and me—while the fuss of getting into the harbour, and getting *pratique*, and the Custom-house inspection was going on, Larry stood by his father's side. They did not speak to one another, but every now and then the captain would put his hand on Larry's shoulder, or touch his arm, as if the mere touch were quite enough; and as for me, I was quite satisfied to sit by Bertie on the quarter-deck, and look at them. When I went below, I stumbled upon old Ray, behind the saloon-door, sobbing like a great schoolboy in his gladness and relief; and I liked him all the better for it, and never told any one, for he was so afraid of being laughed at.

We were not long at Almeria. The Italians were soon put ashore, after many farewells in words we could not understand. The poor mother kissed Bertie's hands, and cried bitterly, as if leaving him opened her wounds afresh, and gave him a keepsake. The poor souls met their friends at Almeria, as we did Larry, and doubtless were as glad.

The boat in which Larry was had been delayed in leaving the *Firenze* after Mr. Ray's boat left, but they had been well clear of the ship when it exploded; and when they looked about, after the first confusion of the shock, the fog had come on, and they could see nothing of the *Larry's Luck*. They rowed in the direction in which they thought she lay, but they must have gone quite the wrong way. Night came on, and many of them lost heart; but Larry never did, and kept up their spirits. He laughed and talked away in English, with a word or two of their lingo now and then, and made them laugh in spite of themselves. He made the three women as snug as he could, and nursed one of the babies, and got it to sleep, and took his turn at the oar as willingly and more cheerfully than any of them. In the morning they were out of sight of the *Larry's Luck*, on the open sea. Luckily, there were some biscuits and a keg of water on board, and these were dealt out in rations, and happily the sea was smooth. In the afternoon a steamer came in sight, and they hoisted a shirt on an oar to attract her notice, thinking it was the *Larry's Luck*; but it was the *Iris* going home from Genoa, and she picked them up and brought them to Almeria, where they had been a whole day before we arrived. And oh! how thankful I felt, when I heard that, that Captain Brady had done his duty.

When we were off again, and out to sea, and Almeria was left behind, the captain read the service on the quarter-deck. The sun was setting gold and crimson in the west, and the evening star coming softly into sight, as he thanked God 'for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life.' There was many a tear in the eyes even of hardened old salts in the forecastle, who for many years had gone down to the sea in ships, and seen God's wonders in the deep; and I am sure there was not one heart that did not join in the captain's great thankfulness: 'For this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.'

Oh, how different it was going to bed that night! how different the thought of going home! how pleasant to hear Larry's voice above, whistling as he came down from the deck-cabin, where he had been with his father!

I was half asleep when I heard him banging away close by my head. 'Tom, I say! Tom! All's well!' and then, 'Thank God, all's well!' And that night, when I heard the watch, I echoed, 'All's well! Thank God, all's well!' and turned over and went to sleep.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE next day we had a regular jollification in Larry's honour. The Union Jack and the Dolphin flag were hoisted all day, flying in the stiff east wind that made the green Atlantic toss and tumble in a manner that would have been rather trying if we had not been too happy to be sea-sick.

Old Ray had given himself an extra close shave, and all the men were in holiday rig; the stokers had washed their faces, and the engine-room cat had a piece of red braid round its neck. As to the cook, he was thoughtful and absorbed in the morning, hot and fierce in the middle of the day, mild and exhausted in the evening, for there was what Larry called 'A regular getting upstairs of plum duff:' which sits heavy on a cook's mind beforehand, and still heavier on other people's digestion afterwards.

The captain's face was a sight to see—it made one laugh and cry to look at it. It was a Union Jack, and a fair wind, and a plum-pudding, all rolled into one: and he looked at every one with a Larry's-come-back, homeward-bound, shake-hands-all-round expression. He went about whistling 'Jack Robinson,' and never got to the end of the tune all day, because he could not help smiling; and it is impossible to smile and whistle at the same time. You try! He chirruped to the stewardess's canary, and coaxed the engine-room cat, and made a regular mull of taking an observation at twelve o'clock.

As for Larry, he was 'clean daft,' the second mate said; he seemed resolved to break his neck as he had not got drowned, and he tumbled against everything that came in his way, till he must have been black and blue all over, and he ended by breaking

a pane of glass in the saloon skylight and cutting his hand badly with the glass. 'I'm the most unlucky fellow in little things that was ever invented,' he said, as the stewardess was tying it up for him; 'and the most thundering lucky in big things!'

We all went into the forecastle in the evening, when Larry's health was drunk. Larry shook hands with the men all round, and most of them had a few words to say, with a hitch up of the trousers, or the back of a rough hand drawn across their mouth, or scratching behind their ear: words rough and rude as the wind and waves outside, but wholesome, and strong, and hearty all the same.

I could only see Larry's ears while they spoke, but these grew redder and redder every moment; and when the last man had said his say, I was not surprised to see Larry edging off behind his father, and nudging him to say something in reply. But Captain Brady, who was also very red in the face and had his hands plunged very deep in his pockets, kept his mouth shut like a trap and his eyes fixed with apparent interest on the dim oil lamp swinging from the beam, and was seemingly unconscious of Larry's nudges and hints, and old Ray pushed Larry forward to the table, so that he had to answer for himself. He did not a bit know what to say, and he looked round at us all in the silence, and then spoke quickly and in a low voice.

'Thank you, mates,' he said; 'and thank God——' and then he choked, and the men began cheering with such lungs as only British seamen have. Three times three for Larry, and then 'another and a good 'un;' and then three more; and then three for the captain and the old ship: and then three for Bertie and me.

Larry had plenty of time to recover his composure, and did so very successfully, so that he was very soon joining in the cheering as loud as any of them; and when they finished up with three more cheers for him, he could not resist joining too; and when they went on to singing 'For he's a jolly good fellow!' he roared it out at the pitch of his voice, quite oblivious that he was the jolly good fellow referred to!

The captain, meanwhile, had gone off, but Bertie and Larry and I stopped some time there, while the men sang some rollicking sea songs—'Jack Robinson,' 'The Bay of Biscay,' 'A fair Wind and a flowing Sheet,' 'The Death of Nelson,' and 'The Battle of the Nile.' Larry sang a song, too, with much spirit but no particular tune, and an energetic chorus about 'Hearts of Oak.' Then Mac undertook to dance a hornpipe, and a space was cleared, and the cook fetched his concertina, which had a horrid way of stopping in the middle of a tune to gasp; but it did not much matter, for there was too much noise to hear its defects very distinctly. And then Mac, encouraged by the approval which his hornpipe had met with, volunteered to show us the sword dance, 'which,' he said, 'folk will not know to dance of late years, however.' And Larry fetched two cutlasses from the captain's cabin, and the dance was accomplished with much energy if not grace.

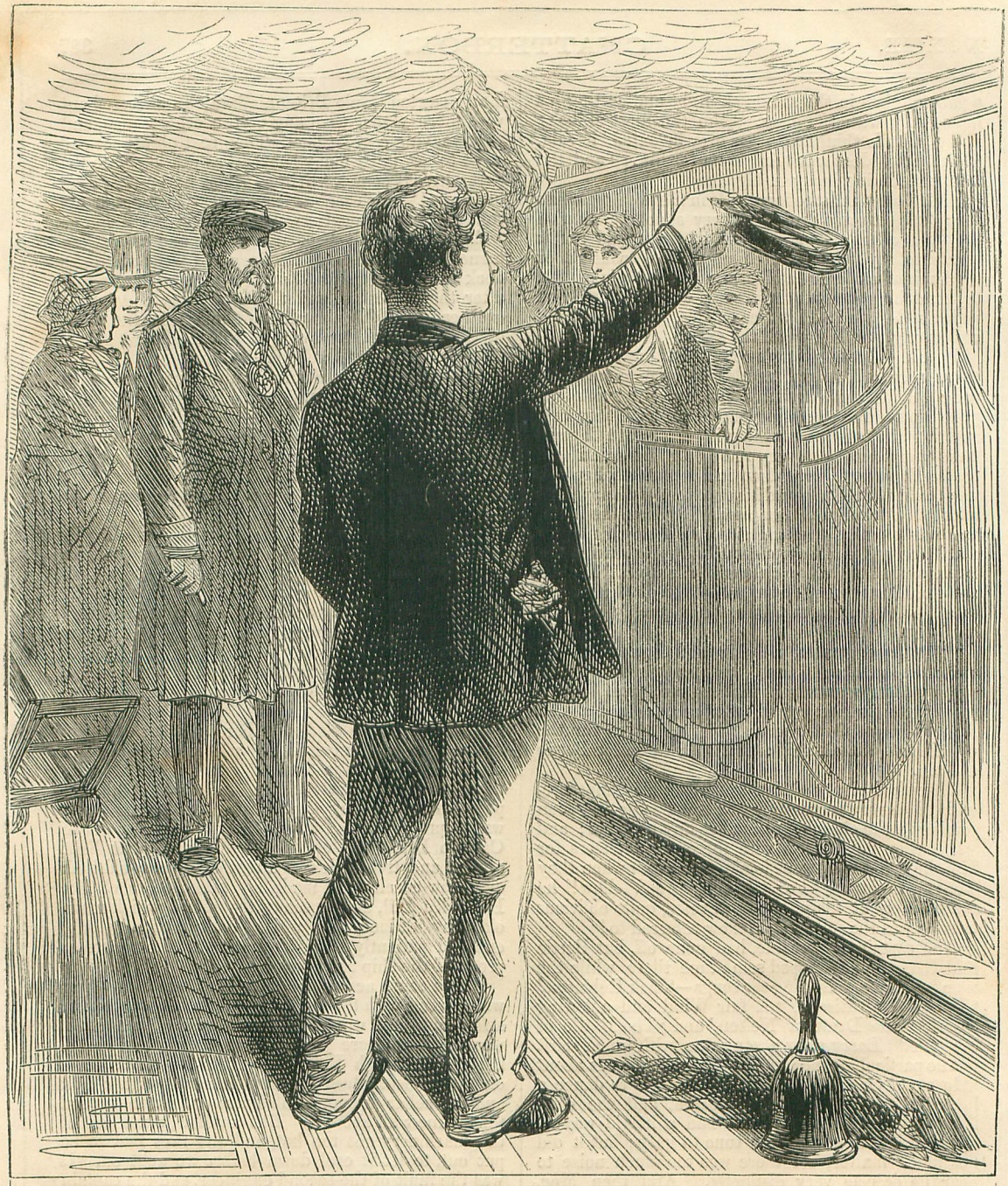
The cabin was getting hotter and hotter every moment and more full of smoke, and the noise louder and more deafening. However, seven bells had sounded and the watch would soon be changed, so Larry started 'Rule Britannia,' which was roared out with more vigour than any of the other songs, and that is saying a great deal. The great object seemed to be to get in as many 'nevers' as possible into the part where it comes, 'Britons never, never, etc., shall be slaves!' which makes it necessary to humour the tune to admit the extra words.

And then eight bells was struck and the watch turned out, and Larry, Bertie, and I went off to the deck aft, where the wind was blowing fresh and cool after the hot cabin, and the stars thick and bright overhead, and the phosphorus shining in the wake of the ship, and far away on the starboard side a flashing light from the Spanish coast.

After the noise and fun in the forecastle it was very pleasant to stand there with Larry in the silence of the night under the solemn stars, and I think he felt it too, for when the captain called to us from the deck cabin to come and have a look at the chart he gave a deep sigh, even though he was off in a twinkling, ready and eager to go anywhere to his father.

We were counting the days now that would pass before we reached home, and they were but few, for with a fair wind and a moderate sea we made good way. It really is a wonderfully quick boat, the *Larry's Luck*. You go for a voyage in her, and try! Old Ray used to declare 'on his davy' (whatever that may be) that there was no boat, English or American, that could beat her; that she had made a quicker passage between Liverpool and New York than any of the liners they make such a fuss about. 'Why, with three blades off her propeller she beat one of the Red Funnel Line!' and so on by the yard. Captain Brady was just as bad, though he tried sometimes to conceal his feelings, and to fish for compliments by making depreciating remarks. Larry was as proud of the *Larry's Luck* as any one, but to Captain Brady and old Ray he always made light of her, and treated her as a regular creaky old hulk and slow-coach, and made sly remarks about Mr. Plimsoll's Bill, and unseaworthy ships, which made old Ray furious, and which Captain Brady only endured patiently from knowing that Larry was as proud of the ship as he was himself.

As we came across the Bay of Biscay something went wrong with the engines, and we had to stop for a few hours. I will not attempt to explain what it was, for I am sure you would not understand it; I never did, though Larry held forth for ever so long on the subject, illustrating his remarks with a fork and salt-cellar at dinner, till I was obliged to pretend that I knew all about it. But anyhow, some part of the machinery got too hot, and the fires had to be put out, to let it cool down before we went on. It was the fault of the second engineer, and the captain was very much vexed about it, as it delayed our arrival in Liverpool, and injured the machinery as well. We suggested to the captain to put the second engineer in irons, or hang him from the yard-arm; but he only laughed, and said he would wait till the next offence. Larry came up with an awful face during the morning, and beckoned to us to come and see the way in which the culprit had been punished; and when we looked into the engine-room we saw a man's leg sticking out of the furnace door.



Larry waving his cap, and shouting "All's Well!"

'There,' said Larry, in a tragic tone, 'that's what comes of overheating the engines!'

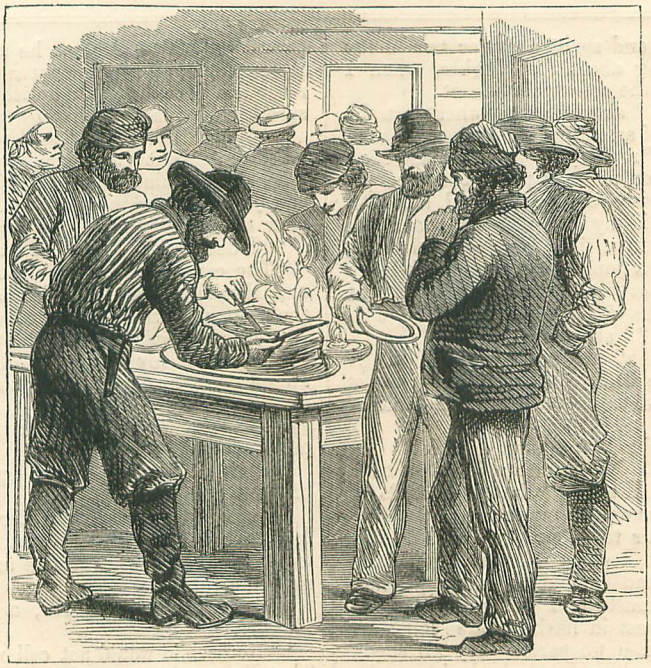
But we were not to be taken in, for we knew that the fires were out, and that it was one of the stokers clearing out the ashes. It was very unpleasant though to toss about in the Bay of Biscay, with a good deal of swell on. It is bad enough when the ship has some way on her, but when she is just rolling about in the trough of the sea, anyhow, it is a hundred times worse; and I said at last to Larry, 'If we don't go on in half an hour, I shall certainly be sick.' Larry poked up poor old Ray about this accident till he was as savage as a bear.

'I say, Mr. Mate, how long do you give us to reach Liverpool?'

'Two days, easy.'

'Two days after Christmas, or before?'

'The day after to-morrow,' growled the mate.



'The day after to-morrow fortnight! Oh! very likely!'

And then another time.

'I say, Mr. Mate?'

'Well!'

'Did you see that old hulk of a collier getting under way at Almeria?'

'Yes; an old tub that could scarcely keep her timbers together. Now I'd give her two months to reach Liverpool.'

'Well, when she passes us I shall send on a note to tell the Liverpool folk to expect us in another month.'

Old Ray's wrath was beyond expression, and he ate his biscuit quite savagely. Larry also inquired anxiously of the steward if they had enough stores on board to last over Christmas, and came back in pretended despair to tell us that starvation was staring us in the face.

But very soon the screw was turning again, and sea-sickness and starvation were no longer imminent, but we were going home at the rate of 10½ knots an hour, as the log testified. They had a patent log always dragging in the sea behind the ship—a sort of brass fish, with a place to open, where you could see the glass inside that registers the rate it goes at. And besides this, they used to heave the log every few hours; that is, drop a wooden thing with a line fastened to it on the sea, and let the line run out as fast as it would, and then calculate with a minute-glass how much line runs out in a minute. And both the patent log and the line agreed that we were going about 10½ knots an hour, and we made short work of St. George's Channel, and came into the mouth of the Mersey on the evening of the day which old Ray had prophesied. The pilot came on board that night, but we could not go into the river till next morning; so we had to content ourselves with seeing English lights in the distance, and with feeling that we were very near home.

And so when I looked out of my port next morning there was Liverpool, grey and smoky; as unlike gay Naples, with its white buildings and sunshine, and blue sky and sea, as possible. It was raining hard and it was very cold and raw.

'A fortnight ago,' Bertie said, 'it was summer, and we were eating ices and broiling at Naples, and now it is winter! Where's my great-coat? And how jolly a real English fire will be!'

We were very sorry to say good-bye to Captain Brady and the *Larry's Luck*, and all the crew, who seemed like dear old friends to us, and to think of our voyage as a thing of the past; but in spite of this, and the cold, and rain, and smoke, there is no country in the world half as jolly as England, and there is nothing so pleasant as going home. Larry came on shore with us to see us on board the train to London, and as the train moved off out of the station he stood waving his cap, and shouting out 'All's well!'

A DIGGER'S STORY.

(*Concluded from page* 380.)

CHAPTER III.

'WE stayed at the Hills of Hope,' said Uncle Ben, 'until we had secured enough gold to make us all rich men. We now had to convey our treasure to Port Michael; but as we dare not carry it all at once, we drew lots to decide who should go with the first half, and who should stay and keep watch over the remainder. A great hole was dug in a birch-wood, and half the gold was carefully hidden there. Three of our body remained behind, and the other eight, of whom I was one, travelled to Port Michael. We banked our gold, and got a re-

ceipt for the weight, and spent a day or two in the town. I was looking about for Hughes, when I suddenly met him at the corner of a street.

'"Hullo, old Ben!" shouted he; "where are the greys, and the coat of arms?"

'"Not quite ready," replied I; "but wait and see."

'"What! aren't you tired of the pickaxe yet?" said Hughes. "I wish you'd come and help me. I want another hand in my ham-and-beef shop."

'"Well," said I, "next time I come I'll look in, and help you off with a pound or two. I don't fancy being a waiter in a greasy atmosphere myself. I like the air on the Hills of Hope better."

'"Where are they?" asked Hughes.

'"Oh, I forgot; that was after you left us. A few chaps and I have had some little luck in a spot I discovered, and we've called the place the Hills of Hope."

'"Well," said Hughes, "what sort of luck?"

'"Oh, pretty good. But there are eleven of us."

'"I reckon," said Hughes, "that your Hills of Hope will never pay as well as my eating-house."

'"Every man to his taste," said I. "I'll look you up, Indigo, when I come this way again."

'In a month we had banked all our gold, and divided the spoil. I must say I was vastly pleased with my own cleverness in having chosen ten such good fellows; and when we parted they all shook me heartily by the hand, and vowed I had been the making of them. Five of the party went back to toil on among the Hills of Hope, and the other five set up in business at Port Michael, and are now doing well. I kept at home until I had had my coat of arms painted on a smart carriage which I hired. As the heralds say, my shield was a stone proper, and underneath the motto, "No Stone unturned." The supporters were not a lion and unicorn, but a spade and a pickaxe. I hired a pair of grey horses and a demure-looking coachman. Dressed in my usual digger's costume, I sat in my new vehicle; and many a stroller in the streets turned round to have some fun out of the successful digger. "That chap will make the butter fly," said one. "He'll have to sell his greys in six months, and go back to the diggings," said another. But I laughed too, and thought I was not such a fool as I looked.'

'But did you look a fool, Uncle Ben?' said Ellen.

'I don't know, my dear; but people thought a plain, rough digger looked silly maybe, as he sat in a smart coach, drawn by a pair of dashing grey horses. Had I chosen to dress in black cloth, I might have rolled along the Commercial Street unnoticed. But I wished to have a joke with Indigo. "Drive me to Hughes's eating-house in Skinner Street," said I to the coachman. It was now dinner-hour, and the smell of roast meat made me hungry, as I left my carriage at the door and entered Hughes's eating-room. What a slave poor Indigo looked, carving a huge smoking joint! The labour of gold-finding was nothing to it. It was some time before I could work my way through the hungry crowd, but at length I got near enough to shout out,—

'"I'll trouble you for a bit well done, old boy, and a slice of fat."

'Hughes looked up from the sirloin, and nodded me his welcome; he was too busy for words. Having carved me such a piece as he thought would suit, I presented him a magnificent new silver plate for its reception. Hughes started with surprise, and put the slice back. I laughed heartily at his amazement.

'"What, Ben Stone!" said he, "do you really eat off silver? Is it true, then, you are a rich man? I heard something of it, but of course I said, 'The cow jumped over the moon.' But come, and have your dinner comfortably in my private room."

'"I don't mind, Indigo," said I.

'The carving was now handed over to a helper, and Hughes and I went into a comfortable room, the window of which commanded the front door.

'"Excuse me," said Indigo; "there's some great swell come to my shop." And he bounced out to attend upon the owner of the smart barouche which stood at his front entrance.

'The coachman said: "Master's gone inside, ten minutes ago."

'"Indeed!" said Hughes, greatly puzzled. "I have not seen him."

'I was roaring with laughter at the affair, when Indigo came in again. He had caught sight of the motto, "No Stone unturned," and the mystery was cleared up at once.

'"Then are you, indeed, a rich man?" asked Hughes.

'"Rothschild would not call me one," I replied; "but I'm worth twenty thousand pounds at least."

'"What a simpleton I was not to stop with you!" exclaimed Hughes. "I'm not doing amiss, but I reckon that it will take me twenty years to save half that sum."

'"Well," said I, "there's a good deal of luck in these things, and perhaps you would do better if you had more capital."

'"Of course I should!" said Indigo; "that's what I need."

'"Well, Indigo, you were always a good fellow while we were chums, and I'll tell you what I will do. You shall say what sum you require to set you up in first-rate style, and I will lend it you. You shall pay me no interest, and no bond shall exist, except your promise to repay it when you are able."

'Indigo's eyes did sparkle at this. He mentioned the sum of 5000*l*. And before I left Port Michael I had the pleasure of eating my dinner and sleeping in the Grand Hotel which adorned the chief thoroughfare of Port Michael. Having seasoned my good fortune with this act of friendship I set sail for Old England, where I hope to end my days.'

'Not yet, dear uncle, I hope,' said Lucy.

'No, I hope not,' returned her uncle. 'I should like to see you all men and women first. But though I have come from the mines with a guinea to spare, I say to you boys, Don't be gold-diggers. And though I did surprise Indigo with my silver plate and dashing carriage, and was able to do him a great service, I believe in my heart he was the wiser man of the two. Where one man turns up a fortune, ninety-nine are disappointed.'

'Because they don't study geology, I suppose,' said John. 'Well, uncle, it is a good thing for us that you were one of those who did succeed; and we are much obliged to you for your presents and your story.'

G. S. O.

WISH AND WILL.

WISH is a good-natured fairy,
Flitting gaily o'er the earth,
Frolicsome, and light, and airy,
But of little strength or worth.

Powerless for a great endeavour,
Seldom in one humour long,
Much of good she doeth never,
If she doeth little wrong.

Will is an impetuous giant,
Strong of nerve and big of bone;
But too headstrong and defiant
When he wandereth alone.

But he hath a sister, Duty,
Who can lead him clear of all,
Excellent in worth and beauty,
As in might the giant Will.

He is meek before her order,
As a mastiff to a child,
But as bold to aid and guard her
As a lion in the wild.

For, despite his rugged breeding,
He respects the gentle maid,
And if men invoke her leading
She is prompt to render aid.

Know you not her present station?
Ask of Conscience—she will tell;
You must know her habitation,
And she knoweth Duty well.—W. R. E.

IN DURANCE VILE.

PEOPLE of an ingenious turn sometimes amuse themselves by turning the letters of one word into another word, or the letters of two words into one or two other words; by which process, 'Old England' becomes 'Golden land;' 'Lawyers' are 'Sly ware;' 'Potentates' are degraded into 'Ten tea-pots;' 'Organs' into 'Groans;' and 'Horatio Nelson' might have discerned some of his future greatness if some wizard had shown him that his own name could be transformed into 'Honor est a Nilo.' Perhaps one of the best and most pointed of these transpositions may be made out of the word, 'Punishment:' rearrange that terrible word, my friends, and it becomes the no less terrible word, 'Nine thumps.'

I wonder whether the disconsolate man in our illustration has had his nine thumps? Certainly he is in for punishment, and he perhaps wishes they would give him nine thumps and let him go. What has he been doing? 'Drunk and disorderly,' was that it? Found prowling near Farmer Goodchild's hen-roost, or in the Squire's preserves? Or, taken up on mere suspicion of housebreaking, while the real culprit is miles away?

It may be so; many an innocent man besides Paul and Silas have had their feet made fast in the stocks.

A crowd gathers, of course, when the news flies through Steeple Mudflat; and what a Hector the big constable looks in his top-boots, as he wipes his brow, and throws his handkerchief into his hat again!

The village preacher is, or has been, reading the villain a homily. The prisoner is stretching out his hand, as if he were making his defence. Will he be able to persuade the gowned elder that it was the orange-peel in the punch, or that he neither had an eye on the farmer's Dorkings, nor on Lord Cecil's pheasants?

But where are the village stocks now? In 1376, the Commons prayed the king for the establishment of stocks in every village; but where are they now? Gone! gone! like many another curious invention of the good old times! gone to the limbo of many another punishment! Where are now the bored tongue, the drunkard's cloak; the cucking-stool, by which scolds were drenched in the horse-pond; the brank, an iron cap also for scolding women; the whirligig; peine forte and dure, which laid heavy weights on the sufferer's chest until he died, and many more? They are gone.

'The judgments of the English courts,' says Sir W. Blackstone, 'formed a disgusting catalogue, though it does honour to the English law to compare our punishments with the shocking apparatus of death and torment to be met with in the criminal codes of almost every other nation in Europe; the humanity of the English nation having authorised, by a silent consent, a mitigation of such part of the punishments as savoured of cruelty.'

And that humanity has gone further still, and has quietly, but firmly, put down many a vile deed done in the holy name of justice; such as slitting of nostrils, cutting off ears, branding in the cheek, and such-like.

In this we see a good omen.

When Pagan Rome was in her glory, growing daily more powerful, she had eight punishments, none of which can be called cruel, especially when we remember she had never learned that 'God is love.' But in her decline she became tigerish, and a menagerie of leopards and lions was kept for the express purpose of tearing unhappy prisoners to pieces. Thus excited and cherished, these brutal passions degraded that once heroic people, and opened the gates of the empire to the men whom God called from forest and wild to feast like vultures on the carcass of the bloody city.

Evil-doers, of course, deserve their 'nine thumps,' but we are to remember that the vagabond is our brother; and only he that is without sin may cast a stone or a hard name at his neighbour, as he sits in the stocks ashamed and disconsolate.

G. S. O.

In Durance Vile.

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Chatterbox.

Pig-sticking in the Jungle.

PIG-STICKING IN THE JUNGLE.

THIS vulgarly-named pastime is thought to be 'fit for a king,' and inferior to none in India. Though the elephant, the tiger, and the panther, are far more noble animals than the wild boar, yet he yields to none in cunning and hardihood; nor is any one of them better able to show fight. Piggy scorns the brawling tomtoms and horns of the game-beaters. He will not be driven where they wish him to go, out into the open, where the hunters are waiting with their long spears; instead of that, he frequently breaks back, as it is called, and dashes into the depths of the cover, through the line of the beaters. This shows that piggy is no simpleton. But sometimes he is driven perforce out of his lair into the open, with cries of '*Soor, jata hy.*'—There goes the pig! Ready to receive him are the hunters, well mounted on horses which enjoy the dangerous sport, and armed with spears. When the pig does appear, grunting a savage grunt, and running at a speed hardly credible, the excitement knows no bounds. Who is to stick the pig? What cunning right arm is to send the spear home to the hunted beast's heart? Let him who attempts to rob the pig of his life beware how he does it. If his aim be true, and his arm strong, the pig will die without a groan. But if the spear makes only a flesh-wound, the furious animal will turn savagely round, and inflict with his tusks a ghastly gash upon the horse's flanks, and cover both steed and rider with blood.

An experienced hunter tells us that the boar, when severely wounded, will charge against the spear, and force its shaft clean through his own body, in order that he may bury his tusks in the flesh of his enemy's horse. He also says, that neither the lion nor the tiger will assail a solitary boar, unless they can pounce upon him unawares. His tenacity of life is very great, for he will sometimes sustain a dozen spear-wounds before he is killed.

Boar-hunting was esteemed in the middle ages a regal sport, both in England and on the Continent. Wild boars have long disappeared from our island, but, though no longer the rich man's sport, the pig still is, and probably ever will be, the poor man's savings'-bank, and the chief supply of his meat.

G. S. O.

AUDUBON THE ORNITHOLOGIST.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON, the celebrated American ornithologist and naturalist, was born in the year 1776, on a plantation in Louisiana. Audubon's father was the first to inspire him with that love of natural objects with which his pursuits were to be afterwards so closely associated. When Audubon had reached the age of fifteen his father sent him to France—whence his family originally emigrated—to complete his education, and he there received instruction in drawing from the celebrated painter, David, to whom he owed his earliest lessons in tracing objects of natural history. After staying in Paris two years, Audubon returned to his native land, where he married a Miss Blakewell, the daughter of an English gentleman who had purchased the adjoining property.

A farm having been given to him by his father, Audubon tried farming as a pursuit, but it was not a success with him. In the preface to his great work, *The Birds of America*, he says:—

'My life was a series of vicissitudes. I tried various branches of commerce, but they all proved unprofitable; doubtless because my whole mind was ever filled with my passion for rambling, and admiring those objects of nature from which alone I received the purest gratification.'

It was whilst residing at Louisville that Audubon was visited by Alexander Wilson, the Paisley weaver, who became as much renowned as an ornithologist as Audubon. At this time Wilson was engaged in compiling an ornithological work, drawing, etching, and colouring all the plates himself; and when Audubon offered to subscribe for the work, a friend who was with him told him that he could make much better drawings of his own, and so Audubon was restrained from becoming a subscriber. Wilson told him that he had never the most distant idea that any other individual than himself had been engaged in forming such a collection.

Having decided to leave Louisville, Audubon went to reside at Hendersonville, where he went into partnership with his brother-in-law, but the venture was a failure. He was then led to join others in a steam-mill, but this was also unsuccessful. He therefore left Hendersonville with his sick wife, his gun, his dog, and his drawings, and returned to Louisville, where Audubon, being possessed of considerable skill as a portrait-draughtsman, soon found plenty of employment, and his fame was spread so far that he tells of a settler who came from a considerable distance in a waggon to fetch him in the middle of the night, in order that he might have the portrait of his mother taken while she was on the eve of death.

An irresistible attraction now drew Audubon to visit the primeval forests of America in search of natural objects; and he made long and perilous journeys without a human companion, and was for years absent from his family. During his absence his wife occupied herself in teaching, in order that her husband should be free to follow his pursuits. He says,—

'I had finally determined to break through all bonds, and follow my ornithological pursuits. My best friends solemnly regarded me as a madman, and my wife and family alone gave me encouragement. My wife alone declared that my genius should prevail, and that my final success as an ornithologist should be triumphant.'

It was during these excursions, which were continued with but short intervals of repose during fifteen years, that Audubon executed upon the spot, and after nature, the series of coloured designs which were, in after years, to compose his magnificent collection of American birds.

The following anecdote, which was related by Audubon, may be taken as an instance of his perseverance under adversity:—

'An accident, which happened to two hundred of my original drawings, nearly put a stop to my researches in ornithology. I shall relate it merely to show how far enthusiasm, for by no other name can I call my perseverance, may enable the preserver of nature to surmount the most disheartening difficulties. I left the village of Henderson, in Kentucky, situated on the banks of the Ohio, where I resided for several years, to proceed to Philadelphia on business. I looked to my drawings before my departure, placed them carefully in a wooden box, and gave them in charge of a relative, with injunctions to see that no injury should happen to them. My absence was of several months; and when I returned, after having enjoyed the pleasures of home for a few days, I inquired after my box, and what I was pleased to call my treasure. The box was produced and opened; but, reader, feel for me! a pair of Norway rats had taken possession of the whole, and reared a young family among the gnawed bits of paper, which, but a month previous, represented nearly a thousand inhabitants of air! The burning heat which instantly rushed through my brain was too great to be endured without affecting my whole nervous system. I slept for several nights, and the days passed like days of oblivion, until the animal powers being recalled into action through the strength of my constitution, I took up my gun, my note-book, and my pencils, and went forth to the woods as gaily as if nothing had happened. I felt pleased that I might now make better drawings than before, and ere a period not exceeding three years had elapsed my portfolio was again filled.'

Audubon's collection of birds having multiplied on his hands, he decided to publish the result of his researches in the form of a scientific work; and, strongly urged by his friends to do so, with this object he paid a visit to Philadelphia, where he made the acquaintance of Prince Canino, son of Lucien Bonaparte, who received him most kindly, and manifesting great interest in his undertaking, introduced him to the Natural History Society and the leading men of the town, who encouraged him to publish his designs. Audubon next went to New York, where he says he met but little encouragement, and that 'he looked to Europe as his only hope.'

Accordingly, in the year 1826, Audubon came to England with four hundred drawings, which he exhibited at the Royal Institution, at Liverpool, and realized a sum of one hundred pounds. Lord Stanley was a visitor, and spent five hours in examining the collection, and told Audubon 'that his collection was unique, and deserved the patronage of the Crown.' Audubon then paid a visit to Manchester, and also to Edinburgh, when he published the prospectus of his great work, where he was well received. Proceeding to London, he was introduced to Sir Thomas Lawrence, who was extremely kind to him, and brought him several customers for his paintings, and advised him, instead of giving a picture he had intended to present to George IV., to sell it for three hundred guineas, saying 'that it was too good to give away!' Audubon exhibited the picture, and refused three hundred guineas for it, and after keeping it several years sold it to a friend for one hundred guineas, and invested the amount in spoons and forks for his wife.

The Birds of America was published in numbers, the first volume being completed in 1829. Sir David Brewster, Sir Humphry Davy, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Jeffrey, Captain Basil Hall, and other eminent men, were warm supporters of the undertaking, which even exceeded all expectations.

Audubon next visited Paris, where Cuvier and Humboldt received him with distinction. He afterwards returned to America, and established himself in peaceful retirement on the banks of the Hudson. He was induced once again to revisit England with his family; but as he found that subscribers did not pay up as regularly as he expected, and money being required to push forward the engravings of *The Birds of America*, he again resorted to his pencil and brush, and painted birds and quadrupeds, for which he found a ready sale at good prices. At this period (1830) Audubon began to prepare his *Ornithological Biography of the Birds of America*, a work containing nearly three thousand pages — that work which, in its completed form, Cuvier pronounced to be 'The most gigantic biblical enterprise ever undertaken by the enterprise of a single individual.'

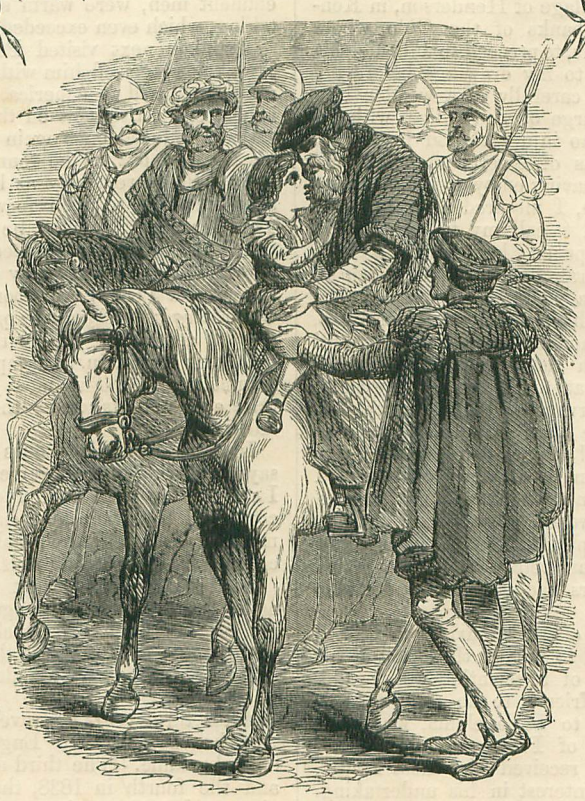
In speaking of his labours at this period, Audubon says, 'Writing now became the order of the day. I sat at it as soon as I awoke in the morning, and continued the whole long day, and so full was my mind of birds, and their habits, that in my sleep I continually dreamed of birds.'

In 1831 Audubon went back to America, and again returned to his congenial occupation of exploring the woods in search of new specimens in ornithology, and following the birds in their migrations, he crossed the mainland, and made his way to Labrador.

After three years of travel and research, in 1834 Audubon again visited England, and published his second volume. The third appeared the year after, and the fourth in 1838, the whole containing 435 plates and 1065 specimens of the size of life. On his return to his home in America he undertook, in conjunction with Dr. Bachman, another great work, *The Quadrupeds of America*, the first volume of which appeared in 1848. Audubon was assisted in his labour by his two sons, but most of the birds were painted by himself in the forest, while their plumage was bright and fresh; yet he was never satisfied with the brilliancy of his colouring, since it did not represent life itself. Audubon continued his labours without intermission; and when he returned from his last expedition to the Western Prairies he had nearly reached his seventieth year. His faculties were now failing, and he accepted this as a warning that he must now depart for

> 'The undiscovered country,
> From whose bourn no traveller returns.'

The evening of his life was spent in tranquil happiness in the bosom of his friends; and on the morning of January 27th, 1851, when his soul was about to take its flight to the spirit-land, he took the hands of his wife and children between his own and passed peacefully away.



A TALE OF OTHER DAYS.

CHAPTER I.

IN a certain civil war, a knight named Sir Roland happened to choose the weaker side. He drew his sword to fight for it, because he thought it was the right side; he fought for the cause which seemed to him the best, but fortune was against him and his party. They lost battle after battle, and castle after castle; and at length Sir Roland, thinking it useless to fight any longer, put up his sword, took his wife and child, and set off on horseback

to find a new home in another land. But his enemies were watching him, and as he rode along, with his little boy on the saddle before him, a band of men seized him and carried him off to a strong fortress. Just before he entered the gloomy gateway a man in a cloak came up to him and carried off the child. His wife, and a faithful woman-servant, had gone he knew not whither.

Oh! it was a bitter pang to be separated from wife and child in one day; but there was no help for it. He strained his dear boy to his heart, and whispered a few last words in his ear.

'I will, father,' said the child, solemnly.

The knight passed on into the castle, and the man in the cloak carried Arthur away and gave him up to the charge of a rough-looking woodman, who lived in a lone house. His wife offered the boy some bread and milk, which, however, he could not eat for sorrow, and then they sent him up to bed.

Arthur knelt down and said his prayers as usual, aloud. The woodman hearing a voice came up and ordered the boy to be quiet.

'May I not say my prayers?' asked Arthur.

'No,' replied the man; 'at least not aloud. Go to sleep, or I will flog you well: I will have no little rebels here, I can tell you.'

Arthur lived in the woodman's house several years, and had much rough usage and insolence to endure. All that time he heard nothing of his father or his mother. Sir Roland's enemies ruled everywhere in the land, and the cause for which the knight had fought so well seemed lost. But it was not so: the prince who had been beaten tried once more to gain the throne, and many of his old friends were glad.

One day, as Arthur walked in the streets of the neighbouring town, he saw that something unusual had happened: soldiers were moving about, crowds were collected, and all business was at a standstill.

'What is the matter?' said Arthur to a man.

'Matter? Why, Prince John has come again to trouble the country!' replied he.

'Oh! my dear father will be glad if he is alive!' said Arthur, innocently.

'What is that you say, youngster? Are you a Johnnite, you little rebel? If so, come along with me.'

The man dragged Arthur away to the mayor, who, having examined the boy, sent him to prison.

There he remained, almost forgotten, for six months, during which the Johnnites were once more defeated, and the prison filled from day to day with captured rebels.

Some were hanged, and some beheaded, and others were banished. Arthur escaped death for the present. However, to make an example of him, the merciful judge ordered them to put the poor boy's eyes out.

A very clever thought struck his late master, the woodman.

'Now he is blind, your worship,' said he, with a horrible grin, 'send him to keep his father, Sir Roland, company. It will make the old fox happier to see his cub has lost his eyes.'

CHAPTER II.

THE woodman's advice was acted upon, and the blind boy was sent to the castle where Sir Roland was confined.

The knight had heard that his old leader, Prince John, was making another attempt. His hopes revived, but were soon crushed again; and nothing but death, or a life of captivity, seemed before him.

One day, as he was sitting in his great oaken chair, wondering what had become of his wife and child, the door opened, and he looked up.

'I have brought some one to see you,' said the gruff jailor; 'one whom you will be glad to see.'

Sir Roland saw the visitor was a very handsome lad, of about thirteen or fourteen years of age. He advanced into the room doubtfully, and stretched out his hand, as if feeling his way along. The knight then saw that he was blind.

'Another victim of tyranny!' said he to himself.

'I am to leave you together,' said the jailor; 'at least for a while: such are my orders.' So saying, he went away, and locked the door.

'Poor boy!' said the kind-hearted knight; 'why have they blinded thee?'

The boy started at the well-remembered voice, trembled, and turned pale. He knew it was his father who spoke.

'Oh, my father!' said he; 'I am your unhappy son Arthur!'

'Is it possible?' groaned the knight, folding him in his arms. 'My son, my son! how have I longed to clasp thee again to my bosom! but now the joy is blasted by thy great misfortune. Oh, the cursed cruelty which has put out thy bright eyes for ever!'

Here Sir Roland wept, and could say no more; but Arthur consoled him, making light of his own blindness, and turning his father's thoughts towards his mother.

'Do you know where she is?' asked Arthur.

'No, Arthur, no. I trust she escaped the snare of the fowler: I dream of her, and pray for her; but I never dare hope to meet her again in this world.'

Spite of the grief and anger which Sir Roland felt at his dear boy's loss of eyesight, they spent a very happy hour in relating to each other many things which had happened since they parted. They even ventured to hope that they might often meet and cheer each other.

It was not to be. Sir Roland now knew his dear boy was blind, and that was enough to sadden him. He was now allowed to digest that bitter morsel as well as he could; but he and Arthur were to meet no more. How often did he lift up his head, when a light footfall sounded in the long stone passages! It might be Arthur's step! But it was not: and the days came and went; and the stricken father was left alone with his own sad thoughts, and with the company of the angels, who must look upon many a sorrowful scene in this vale of tears.

CHAPTER III.

WE now wish to tell our readers what happened to Sir Roland's wife—the Lady Alice. When her husband was captured no notice was taken of her. Gladly would she have shared his prison, but she was driven from the castle-gates. Hoping all would be well in a few days, she retired to their once happy home; but as it was in the hands of strangers, she and Margaret, who would not leave her, found refuge in an old half-ruined cottage, where they lived for a long time by selling such trinkets as the lady had in her possession. One day, when Margaret had been into the town to buy some food, she came back in tears. 'Mistress,' said she, 'they are seeking for your life; but I will never betray you!'

'For my life?' said Lady Alice. 'I wonder at that. When they took Sir Roland they let me go, as if I were too small game to be netted. But how do you know they are looking for me?'

Margaret took a piece of crumpled paper out of her pocket, and showed it to her mistress. There she saw her own name among a number of proscribed Johnnites.

'What has caused them to care for me, just now, do you think, Margaret?'

'O my lady, since Prince John last tried for his rights, they have determined to root out all those who favour him; and I think they wish to kill off all his friends, down to the last man and last woman.'

'Well,' said the Lady Alice, 'I think I will go and give myself up to them. What care I for life? It has no sweets now for me.'

'Nay, dear mistress,' said Margaret; 'you do not know what may be in store for you. There may be a happy change, and those who are in prison may come forth as gay as butterflies in summer. Cheer up, my lady! But come, let us go and hide in the old manor-house; nobody lives there now. I know all the secret passages and the way to the red chamber. There you might hide for years.'

After some hesitation, the Lady Alice decided on concealing herself in the red chamber of the old manor-house. Perhaps no one living, except Margaret, knew how to get to that room. But Margaret used to visit her old grandmother, when she lived in the manor-house as a pensioner of the family who owned it, and the fearless child had been into every nook and corner of the old building.

Just when the Lady Alice was safely hidden in the red chamber four soldiers visited the cottage. The hearth was yet warm. 'The bird's flown,' said one; 'but she's not far off.' Two of the soldiers guarded the cottage, and the other two returned to their captain for orders. Searching-parties were sent after the fugitives, and some repaired to the old manor, which seemed a likely place for any one to hide in.

As ill-luck would have it, Margaret had gone to the well with a jug for a supply of water when the searching-party arrived. She was sharply questioned, but would answer nothing. She was bribed with gold pieces, she was threatened with bonds and death; but they could get nothing out of her. The leader of the search, growing furious, swore he would burn her secret out of her. Calling for a lighted candle

he held it under her right hand until the flesh blistered and the sinews cracked, but Margaret uttered neither word nor groan.

'Where is your mistress? Where is she whom they call Lady Alice? You may as well tell us, for we are sure she is in this house, and have her we will, if we pull it stone from stone.'

But threats, promises, and pain, could wring no word from Margaret. She was, therefore, sent to prison as an obstinate rebel, and the soldiers proceeded to search every room and closet for the hidden woman.

(Concluded in our next.)

THE RESCUE.

THE following lines describe an incident which happened at the fishing village of Cresswell, on the coast of Northumberland, Jan. 5th, 1876. The ill-fated vessel was a Swedish steamer, and an extract from a Stockholm newspaper, giving an account of the disaster, appeared in the *Times*.

THE year was five days old,
Bitter the wind and frost,
And on the wild Northumbrian coast
The fierce waves raged and tossed.

The stars shone fitfully,
Dark was the moonless night,
When suddenly from seaward leapt
A flash of fiery light.

Again and yet again
Boomed out the signal's roar,
Till all the hamlet's fisher-folk
Were gathered on the shore.

The women sobbed a prayer,
The men, with lusty shout,
Pressed eagerly with right good-will
To get the life-boat out.

With thirteen stalwart men
They manned the trusty boat;
The women rushed into the surf
To push her safe afloat.

A crew of precious lives,
In truth, were in her then,
For none were left save women-folk,
And two white-headed men.

And these kept anxious watch,
As from their straining sight
The messengers of mercy sped
Into the howling night.

Still louder raved the wind,
Still higher rose the sea;
Oh, God! befriend the helpless ones
In their extremity!

In aching, dull suspense,
Like hours the minutes passed,
When through the group a whisper ran,
'They come! they come at last!'

Like a black shadow tossed
Upon the boiling sea,
Straight homeward through the mist and gloom
The boat comes silently.

No shout of glad success
Bursts from the dripping crew,
But, 'Give us breathing time,' they said,
'And we will try anew.

'We cannot spare a man
Some further aid to get,
Else, had we but the rockets here,
Sure we might save them yet!'

Upsprang three fisher-girls,
'Though dark, the way we know,
And we can rouse the coast-guard men;
So, father, we will go!'

Along that dangerous coast,
Through sleet, and wind, and rain,
Five weary miles they bravely plod,
And five miles back again.

But ere, with eager haste,
The needed aid they brought,
The boat had braved the storm again,
And gallant rescue wrought.

And in each cottage home,
Though poor and bare it be,
The shipwrecked men are welcome made
With noble charity.

Here ends my simple lay,
Thank God! its tale is true,—
A tale that tells to Englishmen
What Englishmen can do—

Deeds done by lowly folk,
Unspoiled by sloth and ease,
God send our England at her need
Such hands and hearts as these!

C. H. PURTON.

BIRTHDAY REFLECTIONS.

EACH year as it rolls by seems to rivet with more enduring importance a day of anniversary, more especially one of an event which was the ushering of a responsible creature into an eternity of either misery or joy. As boys, we have looked forward to these anniversaries as the occasion of a holiday; as men, we look back on them as so many waymarks on which are noted the sins and mercies of successive years. They were then seasons of unmingled pleasure, now of self-reproach and melancholy retrospect. Opportunities irreparably suffered to slip by—years of self-indulgence—friends alienated, others wantonly grieved; in some instances the hour of reconciliation lost for ever, because they have gone to their long home. Two lines in the frontispiece of a little hymn-book, which I have not seen since I was five years old, seem branded with letters of fire on my memory:—

'Oh! if she would but come again,
I think I'd vex her so no more!'

F. W. ROBERTSON.

The Rescue. By W. H. J. Boot.

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Chatterbox.

Brave to the End.

BRAVE TO THE END.

AN official in the German army during the late war, writes:—'I had been acquainted from my earliest years, with an officer whose name was Von Koschembahr. I loved him much, for he was a brave soldier as well as a generous, kind-hearted man. We became great friends. In the battle of Gravelotte the Schleswig Infantry Regiment, No. 84, suffered severely, and I learned to my great grief that my friend Captain Von Koschembahr was dangerously wounded. I sought for him the whole afternoon; I searched through all the hospitals, examined all the houses in which wounded men were lying. Towards evening I found him. He was lying in a barn on a bundle of straw, covered with a cloak, and his head resting on a knapsack. Round about him lay the wounded of his regiment. When he saw me he held out his hand to me, and a smile brightened up his features. I sat down beside him, and took his hand.

'Dear friend, how I have been searching for you!' I said. 'And must I find you thus? I see no doctor near. Have your wounds been dressed?'

A shadow passed over his features, but with a calm and firm voice he said,—

'Thanks, my dear friend, for your care, but it is all over with me; I have but a few hours to live.'

Therewith he lifted up his cloak, and I shuddered when I saw the terrible wound: a shell had shattered the lower part of his body. My throat felt as if I were choked. I could not utter a syllable. I bent down over him, and kissed his noble forehead. When I found words again I asked him whether he had any particular wishes, whether there was any service I could do for him.

'Yes, my friend,' said the wounded man, raising himself up with difficulty, 'I have one request; here, close beside me lies, my brave sergeant Hübner. He is mortally wounded as I am. I am a bachelor, I have no family, no near relations; but Hübner leaves behind him a wife and children, and these shall be the heirs of my property.'

The words had been too much for him, and he sank back exhausted on his couch. I raised my flask to his mouth; he drank eagerly. The draught strengthened him. 'Thanks, my friend; take out my pocket-book and write for me.' And now with calm voice he dictated,—

'MY LAST WILL.—I bequeath all my property, consisting in state bonds and ready money which are deposited with the banker M—— in S——, as well as all my household goods, to the widow and children of my brave sergeant Hübner of the 84th Infantry Regiment, who rests on the field of glory. Gravelotte, 18th August, 1870. You, my friend, are my executor.'

Close to the captain's bed of agony lay his sergeant Hübner. At first he did not seem rightly to understand what was passing between us, but when Von Koschembahr dictated his will his pale face was lighted up by a passing blush, and tears rolled down his cheeks. 'Oh, my captain!' said the man, as he raised his hands. He was too weak to lift himself up.

But the captain held out his hand to the sergeant. 'Well, Hübner,' he said, 'we have both hitherto served as brave soldiers, done our duty for king and fatherland, now we will die too like brave soldiers!'

That same night the captain breathed his last in my arms. His sergeant Hübner had died two hours before him. He departed with a smile on his face, for all anxiety about his wife and children had been removed from his heart.

Such is the true story of Captain Von Koschembahr and his last act. His name should be inscribed on the German nation's tablets of honour. J. F. C.

BOYS WANTED.

BOYS of spirit, boys of will,
Boys of muscle, brain, and power,
Fit to cope with anything—
These are wanted every hour.

Not the weak and whining drones,
That all trouble magnify;
Not the watchword of 'I can't,'
But the nobler one, 'I'll try.'

Do whate'er you have to do
With a true and earnest zeal;
Bend your sinews to the task,
Put your shoulder to the wheel.

Though your duty may be hard,
Look not on it as an ill;
If it be an honest task,
Do it with an honest will.

At the anvil or the farm,
Wheresoever you may be—
From your future efforts, boys,
Comes a nation's destiny.

ANECDOTE OF CHARLES XII. OF SWEDEN.

A BRAVE boy makes a brave man. Charles XII. of Sweden is renowned in history for his courage. When quite a little child he gave an example of brave endurance. Sitting at dinner with the queen, his mother, a great dog he was very fond of begged a bit of meat of him. As he gave it, the dog snapped so sharply at it that it caught the child's fingers in its teeth, and inflicted a deep wound. The little six-years' old hero neither screamed nor wept, but hastily hid the bleeding hand in his handkerchief, fearful lest his dog should be beaten if the accident were discovered. The queen, finding that he could take no more dinner, was afraid that he was ill, and begged him to tell her what was the matter. But little Charles would own to nothing, save that he was not hungry. He began to turn so pale, however, from pain and loss of blood, that an officer of the household found out the hurt he had received; and it was well he did so, for the boy would never have betrayed the dog who had wounded his young master without intending it. H. A. F.

THE WONDERFUL TOP.

A LAY OF CAMBRIDGE.

I.

A WRANGLER,* who with *x* and *y*
Had overfilled his crop,
Resolved, one evil hour, to try
And spin a monster top.

The like to which had never spun,
Since that which Blunderbore
Brought home for his prodigious son
To spin upon the floor.

I must, from Huyghens or Lagrange,†
Go borrow proper words
To sketch the apparatus strange
Of pulleys, wheels, and cords,

Contrived to make the polished boss
(Shaped something like an egg),
Five feet in height, and three across,
Gyrate upon its peg.

Suffice to say, the honest Gyp,‡
Half laughing and half sad,
Thought that his master soon would trip
To Bedlam, with the mad.

October's sun has lighted up
The dull brick courts of John's;
By buttered toast and breakfast cup
Sat three high Wrangler Dons;§

Hoping to-day to add a grain
To their dynamic lore,
And write upon their crowded brain
One cusp, or oval, more.

Their coats the earnest Dons have doffed,
To work at rods and cranks:
The Gyp some vague excuse has coughed
And vanished, full of thanks.

He little recks whose head is broke
So that his own be whole,
And thus behind a door of oak
The crafty rascal stole:

Where he in safety could espy,
Through a convenient crack,
His masters with disordered tie,
Flushed face, and bending back,

Till threescore feet of rope is coiled
About the one-legged steed,
And every wheel is freshly oiled
To expedite his speed.

II.

A minute's pause—a loop of wire
Pulled down by bended thumb—
A fluttering noise—a thing on fire—
A most terrific hum!

The ponderous mass whirls madly round,
With anger in its eye;
Pale grow the trio at the sound,
And think it time to fly.

Behind a chair-built barricade
Two doughty champions fled;
The other through the bed-room made
His exit—into bed.

The monster touched an easy-chair,
And smashed it into bits;
Down dropped the disconcerted pair,
Half frightened, into fits.

The top more full of fury grew,
More fevered was his brain,
And right and left mad pieces flew
At wall and window-pane.

He whirled hot embers from the bars,
Then had a moment's snore;
Then scattered shreds of costly jars
Upon the chamber floor.

Then slept again—then made a dash,
And broke old Homer's neck:
The sideboard falls with horrid crash,
The sofa is a wreck.

Cracked is the grand piano's lid,
The flesh is off her ribs——
But if I told you all he did
You'd say I dealt in fibs.

At length, the angry tyrant reeled
With fierce, uncertain gait,
Like some big drunkard, o'er the field,
And met his master, Fate.

Laxer his speed, and yet more lax,
More feeble was his roar;
Then, moribund,‖ he stuck like wax,
Just in the bed-room door.

They breathe again—the quivering lip
Puts off its hue of green;
From his retreat the dastard Gyp
Appears upon the scene.

And when, to see this top of tops,
There came, that afternoon,
Professors, prizemen, Senior Ops,¶
And last year's *wooden spoon*,**

A dozen Gyps, the college Cook,
The Bursar, and the Dean;
Our suffering friend, with rueful look,
Thus vented his chagrin:—

'My pupils deem me very wise,
Yet write me down an ass,
Till I can better harmonise
Velocity and Mass.'

G. S. O.

* Wranglers are the highest class at Cambridge.
† Huyghens and Lagrange were writers on such subjects.
‡ Gyp, a college servant.
§ A Don is the phrase for a college chieftain.

‖ Moribund, just about to die.
¶ A Senior Optime is the second classman in the great mathematical examination.
** The Wooden Spoon is the last man in the same examination.

A TALE OF OTHER DAYS.

(*Concluded from page* 399.)

CHAPTER IV.

It was not long ere the unfortunate lady heard the sound of voices in the next room.

'No doubt she is hiding in this old den somewhere,' said one, 'and sooner than she shall escape us we will set it on fire.'

'Ay,' said another; 'it belonged to an old rebel, and now it belongs to the crown; and nobody lives in it. Let us go down and ask the captain to fire it.'

Lady Alice heard no more; but she had heard enough to assure her that they were in earnest. 'It would be a very dreadful death,' thought she, 'to be burnt alive here. If Margaret would but come now, I would go down and give myself up to them. I wonder why she never came back with the water. I fear she has fallen into their hands. Poor, good Margaret! I scarcely know how to unlock this curious door, which looks so like a piece of the wall, nor how to thread the passages up and down without a guide.'

After some time, the secret spring was pressed and the door flew open, and a steep flight of very narrow stairs appeared. The Lady Alice descended, then ascended—then got bewildered; missed another secret door, and found herself on the leads. Retracing her steps, she arrived at the red chamber again, and had to set out afresh. After about an hour's patient scrambling upstairs and downstairs she suddenly found herself in the gallery, where a soldier was stationed. He sprang upon her and held her fast, bawling out at the top of his voice, 'I have her, captain! I have the prisoner!'

The red-faced officer was soon on the landing, and sent his sub down to stop the fagot-bearing; but in this he was too late, for the fire was already kindled on the windward side of the old house, and it was out of man's power *to* subdue the flames. The Lady Alice was placed in the jail, and the light of the burning manor threw a glare into her cell.

A few days after she was tried, and condemned to death. In vain she pleaded her innocence. She was told that she was the wife of a very malignant traitor, Sir Roland, and she ought to have died years ago. She must prepare for death in three days.

Now that she was brought face to face with man's last enemy, the prisoner felt unwilling to die, and much she wished the memorial she wrote and sent to the king might bring a reprieve. But the three days passed, and no notice was taken of her request. At length the fatal hour arrived, and she was led forth to die. A glass of poisoned wine was prepared and offered to her. In vain she wept and besought them to spare her life. When she saw that she really must die a strange calmness came over her, and she drank the deadly wine with a hand that did not shake the glass. For a few minutes she felt no ill effects; but by-and-by a drowsiness came over her and she sank into a sleep from which there is no awaking.

A few hours after she was dead a *letter came* from the king, ordering the execution to be stayed, and her sentence changed into imprisonment for life; but it was now too late—her spirit had taken its flight to God, who, soon or late, will punish justly all unrighteous and unmerciful deeds.

CHAPTER V.

MARGARET was tried, and found guilty of concealing a traitorous woman and hindering the course of law. She was doomed to follow her mistress along the valley of the shadow of death; and, by a strange chance, if we may so call it, Arthur was sent to the same prison, and condemned to suffer on the same morning.

It was perhaps a merciful thought of the governor which brought Margaret and Arthur together for a little while on that last morning of their lives. As soon as she saw him, Margaret knew her dear master's son.

'Oh, my little master!' said she. 'I know you, though they have put out your beautiful eyes!'

'Is it you, Margaret?' said the boy, a heavenly smile lighting up his face. 'Where is my dear mother, Margaret? Oh, tell me, if you know!'

'Arthur,' said she, 'your mother is in heaven.'

'Are you sure, Margaret?' said Arthur. 'When did she die?'

'I don't know all about my dear mistress's death, but I'm sure she's gone,' replied Margaret. 'I heard them say she was dead.'

'When did you see her last, Margaret?'

'I saw her last in the red room I used to talk to you so much about, Master Arthur. I left her to fetch some water, and they seized and bound me; but I would not betray her, though my hand was dreadfully burnt. How they found her I know not; they set fire to the old house, but she was not burnt, for they say she was poisoned.'

'And have you any news of father?' asked the boy.

'None,' answered Margaret. 'Your dear mother never heard of him since they parted that miserable day, eight years ago.'

'I have seen him—that is—I have been with him, once,' said Arthur, who then briefly related his interview with Sir Roland.

'Poor dear master!' said Margaret. 'I wonder whether he is dead or alive? We shall soon know all.'

Here the deep bell began to toll, and a man entered the room to say they must prepare for death.

Arthur and Margaret knelt down like brother and sister; and the poor boy, so old in trials and sorrow, poured out his whole soul to God. Margaret sobbed by his side, with one arm round his neck. The man who stood by, reverently uncovered himself in the presence of such beautiful holiness. But had he wished and tried ever so much to save these innocents, he had no power to do so.

We draw a veil over the sad scene which followed. But it was a short pang, if a sharp one, which liberated the two faithful spirits, and sped them to God, through the grave and gate of death.

In the twinkling of an eye the souls of Arthur and Margaret joined that of Lady Alice in Paradise, 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest.'

Through some caprice, Sir Roland's blood did not stain the scaffold. He was confined for several years after the death of his wife and child, but he lived to see the Johnnites triumphant, and the destroyers of his earthly happiness punished for their wanton cruelty. G. S. O.

THE FAITHFUL DOG.

A TRUE STORY.

IT was on the close of a December day; twilight was coming on, obscuring the landscape from the eyes of an elderly woman who stood in the doorway of her cottage, gazing far before her, as if she were anxiously waiting and looking for somebody. The scene upon which she was gazing was a dreary one—a vast marsh, stretching for miles to the foot of hills rising in the far distance. This marsh (or Low-water Meadows, as they were sometimes called) was bounded on one side by a forsaken harbour, from which it was separated by clay banks. A deep stream of water flowed through the marsh, only spanned in one place by a little rickety bridge.

At last the woman, not seeing any one, called to somebody in the room behind her: 'Bill, I don't see father coming, and he said he would be home by four and now it's six o'clock.'

At these words the woman's son, Bill Bennet, came and stood by his mother's side.

'You know, Bill,' she continued, 'father's not so young or so quick as he used to be, and that fit he had awhile ago has told on him. Besides, see what a thick mist is rising from the sea; and the weather seems colder this evening than I've known it for a long time. He's got nobody with him but old dog Turp, and he, like his master, is getting old now; so, Bill dear, don't you think you had better go with Robert and see if you can see anything of your father?'

'Well, mother,' her son replied, 'I think you're over-anxious: maybe he's stopped at Farmer Blake's, where he took the sheep in the morning. But I'll go if you like, mother.'

'Yes, do, my son,' the mother eagerly replied; 'and I think you had best be quick, for it's getting very dark; and I will get supper ready by time you and father come home.'

With these words Mrs. Bennet hurried into her little kitchen, while her son went to call Robert, the sheep-boy, to come with him and seek his father.

The room to which Mrs. Bennet returned was a neatly-arranged little apartment, only lighted by a bright wood fire, which shed its flickering gleams over the round table, with its red cloth, in the lattice-window, upon which were a Family Bible and two large, grotesque china dogs; over the shelves arranged along the walls with the plates and tin teapot; and over the stiff-backed wooden chairs. The woman moving about so restlessly completed a scene which may be often witnessed in the interior of many a cottage in Sussex, like that which stood on the borders of the marsh.

Mrs. Bennet sat herself wearily down in a chair, and, resting her head on her trembling hand, her memory glanced over the uneventful life which she had led since her marriage with the shepherd Bennet.

Could it be thirty years ago, she said to herself,

since that bright June evening when she, leaning over the garden gate of her father's cottage, saw Bennet coming down the lane; and entering the garden told her, that although they had only known each other for three months he was about to ask her father to give him permission to marry her? She remembered how she waited in the garden with a fluttering heart until Bennet had come out to her, and said that he had gained her father's consent to their marriage. Ah! how happily she had lived ever since with her husband in that cottage on the borders of that marsh! With what pride and pleasure, Sunday after Sunday, she had gone to the nearest church, with her husband on one side of her and their only child, Bill, on the other! What a happy life she had led, until a month ago, when her husband had been laid so near to death's door by a paralytic fit! Hark! there was the sound of footsteps. She sprang forward and opened the door, but only to see her son.

Bill said that he and Robert had gone some way, but had seen no trace of the shepherd; and so the son, supposing that Bennet must have remained at the farm where he had taken some sheep in the morning, had returned home to his anxious mother.

The next morning Bill went to Farmer Blake's, and learnt that the shepherd had arrived at the farm early in the morning of the day before, and had started to return home about noon; for he said his wife would be anxious if he remained out long, as it was the first time he had been out so far since his illness.

A strict search was now made by all the people round about; and on the morning of the third day since Bennet had been missing, Bill and Robert were seeking in a different direction than that which they had taken before, when something came bounding towards them.

Bill looked down and saw a rough, thin dog.

'Turp, old boy!' he cried, 'is it you? Then father can't be far off now.'

And indeed he was not, for a few steps brought them to where the shepherd lay. His head was resting on a bank, his white hair falling round his pale face, his eyes closed, and his shepherd's staff by his side. Not a breath came between the slightly parted lips—for he was dead! A second fit, probably brought on by the intense cold, had killed him. His good dog, although he well knew the way home—although he was nearly starved for want of food, had been indeed 'faithful unto death,' for he had never forsaken his master until, hearing footsteps, he had sprung forward to bring the son to the spot where the shepherd lay.

They carried him towards the cottage, but before they reached it they saw the widow standing at the door with blanched cheeks, for she knew that it was her husband, and that he was dead.

The old dog Turp did not long survive his master, but died and was buried under the apple-tree in the garden by his old playfellow, Bill.

The Christmas bells rang out merrily to some, but not to Mrs. Bennet, who, leaning on her son's arm, walked through the lanes, then white with snow, to the church where she had so often been with her husband, and to the churchyard in which he was now buried. But the bells brought peace with them, too, for she thought that her husband was now at rest in that long-wished-for Home, and that she would soon join him there.

Ought we not, then, to be kind to our dumb friends, who repay our affection by their faithful love?

EVELINE HOPE CHALLICE.

PRESENCE OF MIND.

SIR THOMAS MORE at all times displayed great presence of mind. 'It happened one day,' says Aubrey, 'that a Mad Tom of Bedlam came up to Sir Thomas, as he was in meditation, according to his custom, on the leads of the gate-house of his palace at Chelsea, and had a mind to have thrown him over the battlements, crying, "Leap, Tom! leap!" The Chancellor was in his gown, and besides, he was aged and not able to struggle with such a strong fellow. My lord had a little dog with him. "Now," said he, "let us first throw the dog down, and see what sport that will be." So the dog was thrown over. "Is not this fine sport?" said his lordship: "let us fetch him up and try again." As the madman was going down my lord fastened the door, and called for help.'

A physician, when the patients of a lunatic asylum found him on the top of the building, and proposed as good sport to make him jump down to the bottom, saved his life by recommending as an improvement on the idea, that they should walk downstairs with him, and see him jump from the bottom of the building to the top!

It is recorded that a poor lunatic was once asked how he came to be detained in Bedlam, and answered, 'By a dispute.'

'What dispute?'

The Bedlamite replied, 'The world said I was mad; I said the world was mad, and they outwitted me.'

TWO BOATS ON LOCH NESS.

A PARABLE.

TWO boats come slowly sailing o'er a lake—
O'er a fair lake among the heathery hills;
Scarcely the water ripples in their wake,
Scarcely a breath the outspread canvas fills.

Then, one boat reaches by-and-by its shore;
With sail and oar the other toils on after.
'We had to trim our sail and ply our oar,
All in our turn,' say voices gay with laughter.

'And were you never weary this hot noon,
Weary with trimming sail and oar long plying?'
For answer comes a friendly rope thrown soon,
And the two boats in the same creek are lying.

Now, children, heed my parable:—you'll find
Far o'er your lives its simple lesson reaches:
When you leave comrades in life's race behind,
Practise the deed this little story teaches.

E. M. A. F. S.

Two Boats on Loch Ness. By W. H. J. Boot.

'THE PRIZE' for Girls and Boys. Price One Penny every month.
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Chatterbox.

Dog Saving a Ship. By Harrison Weir.

A DOG SAVING A SHIP.

—o—

SOME years ago a sea captain from Massachusetts, who was in Havre, in France, obtained there a fine little rat terrier, which he called Neptune, to be a companion on his voyage. Little Neptune soon learned to like the vessel, and he would run up ladders like a little sailor, though he could not come down without help. After the vessel had been at sea some weeks or months, when they began to approach land, before it could be seen by the men, Nep would mount up high on the forward part of the ship, and sniff, and sniff, and bark, and show signs of joy. His scent enabled him to smell the land before it could be seen. He would also detect the approach of another ship when he could not see it, in the same way.

When Nep had been to sea with his master about two years, the *Hortensia*—that was the vessel's name—had been to New Orleans for a load of cotton, and was on her way out of the Gulf of Mexico, into the Atlantic Ocean. For some days there had been squally weather, with light baffling winds, and the vessel had not sailed very rapidly; but she was in a dangerous neighbourhood, and a constant watch was necessary: for along the coast of Florida are long, low reefs, and islands and bars, which have caused the destruction of many vessels.

It had been the captain's watch in the early part of the night—that is, the captain with a few men, remained upon the deck while the rest slept; then the others, at the sound of the bell, came upon deck, the mate took charge of the ship, the men who had been watching went below, and the captain, after telling the mate to call him before three o'clock, went below and turned into his berth to sleep. Nep lay at his master's state-room door, for that was his sleeping-place. There lies in the Florida Straits a large and dangerous rock called the Double-headed Shot Keys. A lighthouse is built upon it, that vessels may be kept from running upon it in the night. 'Be sure to call me by three o'clock,' said the captain, 'as by that time we shall be up with the Double-headed Shot Keys; and sooner if there is a change of weather.'

The night wore on, and all was still but the splashing of the water. The mate went below to get something from his chest, sat down upon it for a few minutes, and before he knew it was fast asleep. The men on deck, receiving no orders, supposed all was right, and one by one they too fell asleep. No one was awake except a Spanish lad, whose turn it was to be at the wheel—that is, the helm, where they steer the vessel.

Meanwhile the wind changed, a stiff breeze sprung up, the sails were filled, and the *Hortensia* ploughed through the ocean briskly, straight towards the Double-headed Shot Keys. The Spanish lad, half asleep at the helm, knew not of the danger, neither could he see ahead from where he stood; for the great sails concealed the view of the lighthouse; but Nep, the good sailor that he was, discovered that land was near—he smelt it.

He rushed down to his master's state-room, and barked and jumped up to him as he lay in his berth. 'Get down! Be still, Nep!' said the sleepy captain. But Nep would not be still. He only barked the louder. 'Be still!' said the captain again; and he pushed the dog away. Again the faithful little fellow jumped up, and kept on barking. The captain, thoroughly roused, began to think something must be the matter. He sprang up, and Nep ran forward, barking, to the companion way. The captain's head no sooner came above the deck than he saw what was the matter. Right ahead was the fearful rock and the lighthouse, and the ship plunging towards it at the rate of nine miles an hour. He seized the helm; the ship struggled—swung round—and when her course was shifted, she was so near the rock that in three minutes more she would have struck and been a wreck. The sleeping sailors were roused to their duty, and the astonished mate rose up from his nap on the chest to learn that but for the faithful dog the waves might have already closed over them.

Do you wonder that the captain thinks his dog is worth his weight in gold? He has been offered large sums of money for him, but money cannot buy him. He does not go to sea now. Nep went as long as his master did, and now he makes himself quietly useful at home by catching all the rats in the neighbourhood. May he live to a good old age, the pet and pride of all who know him!

THE BURIAL OF THE BIRD.

Founded on Fact.

AS mournful a tale as ever was heard,
Is the following one of the death of a bird.
On a beautiful day in the month of July
This bird was intent upon catching a fly;
For a fly-catcher 'twas, as its father had been,
And as pretty a bird as ever was seen.
This fly-catcher sat on the pea-sticks so high,
Intent, as I said, upon catching a fly;
An innocent pastime, and useful as well—
What a nuisance are flies there is no need to tell.
But, alas for the peas it protected from flies!
Alas for the gardener who weeps out his eyes!
Alas for the bird that sat on the stick!
Alas for the garden where flies are so thick!
Alas! and alas! and alas! and alas!
Through that garden so quiet a schoolboy did pass!
He swallowed some strawberries, one, two, and three,
And then he exclaimed 'I will just have one pea.'
But as he approached with his hat on one side,
This poor little birdie he straightway espied;
He picked up a stone and said, 'Now for a shy!'
And he hit the poor dickey-bird right in its eye.
Not a squeak did it give, not one cry did it utter,
But down it fell flat without even a flutter.
The fly-catcher died, and the flies buzz with joy,
At the murderous act of that cruel, bad boy.

Now mark the sequel—mark it well,
What just reward this boy befell:
The lad was riding into school,
In the morning early nice and cool;

When a buzzing fly the pony stung,
The pony shied, and his rider flung.
From off his back the boy did fall,
And on the road we'll let him sprawl.

To render the culprit ashamed of his crime,
It is chronicled thus in the poorest of rhyme;
And now it is printed, that all may read
What quick retribution followed the deed.
If he kills one again, his *name* shall appear
In rhymes still worse to a musical ear;
If he does it a third time, we'll find out a tune,
Make his schoolfellows sing it from morning till noon.
Barrel-organs shall grind it at markets and fairs,
Hurdy-gurdies combine it with 'Wapping Old Stairs.'
Wherever he goes he shall hear it sung,
Till at last in despair he will go and be hung.

P.S.—By the repentant Culprit.

The bird was buried next day with care,
Doubtless escaping many a snare.
A short inscription was placed at its head,
In mournful memory of the dead.
The grave was dug beneath a tree
By the schoolboy, whose grief was distressing to see;
And never again, in the month of July,
Will he take a cock-shot at a fly-catcher's eye.

THE EPITAPH.

Here lies a fly-catcher, who
Was killed by a stone which a schoolboy threw.
Remember, pray,
That the very same day
Saw the schoolboy lie
Unhorsed by a fly.

WONDERS OF NATURE.

FINGAL'S CAVE.

FINGAL'S CAVE, in the island of Staffa, on the west coast of Scotland, is composed of immense columns of basalt, the colour of them being a bluish grey. Basalt columns are generally five-sided, or six-sided; but some are found with eight, and some four sides. They vary in thickness from one to five feet, and are of very different heights. They are, in fact, composed of several short lengths, which are jointed to each other in a curious way, the end of one being hollowed out so as to receive the rounded end of another.

The island of Staffa is composed entirely of basaltic pillars and trap-rock. They meet the eye go where you will. The sides of this wonderful cave are made of the pillars, and the roof is formed partly of the ends of pillars broken off, partly of naked rock. The flooring is evermore the restless, surging sea, whose echoes have given the cave its Gaelic name, 'The Cave of Music.' Sir Joseph Banks did not mend it when, in 1772, he called this remarkable place 'Fingal's Cave.' Fingal was a great hero, who did famous exploits—fighting Caracalla, the son of the Roman Emperor Severus, and helping Cormac to regain the throne of Ireland. It is doubtful whether Fingal ever had anything to do with the cave which now bears his name. But listen to the sound of the measured surge, especially when the stormy winds do blow, and you will own that the name of the country people is both poetical and appropriate; for such grand sea music is hardly to be met with elsewhere. Sir Walter Scott has noticed this in *The Lord of the Isles*. His words are:—

'Not of a theme less solemn, tells
That mighty surge, that ebbs and swells,
And still, between each awful pause,
From the high vault an answer draws,
In varied tone prolong'd and high,
That mocks the organ's melody.'

You enter. The arch of that roof is more than sixty feet above your boat. From side to side the passage is forty-two feet. On either hand is a rude causeway, where a man may walk. But let him beware: the path is broken and irregular; and though a very adroit cragsman may, in fine weather and at low water, creep along the eastern side to the very end, yet it is attended with danger at all times, and it is often an impossible task. But in your boat, if the sea is calm, you may enjoy the fairy scene, and confess to yourself its grandeur. What strange lights are reflected from the surface of the water on the richly varied roof! How soft is the twilight gloom! How regular the cadence of the waves! And when you reach the further end, look back. How delightfully bright that island just fronting the mouth looks in the sunshine, seen as it is through the long dark vista of the Cave of Music! What is it? Iona, did you say? Yes, or I-Colm-Kill, the Island of Colum of the Cells, where the good gospeller, Saint Columba, lived, and toiled, and prayed. In his days, about thirteen hundred years ago, Iona was the chief seat of learning in all Europe.

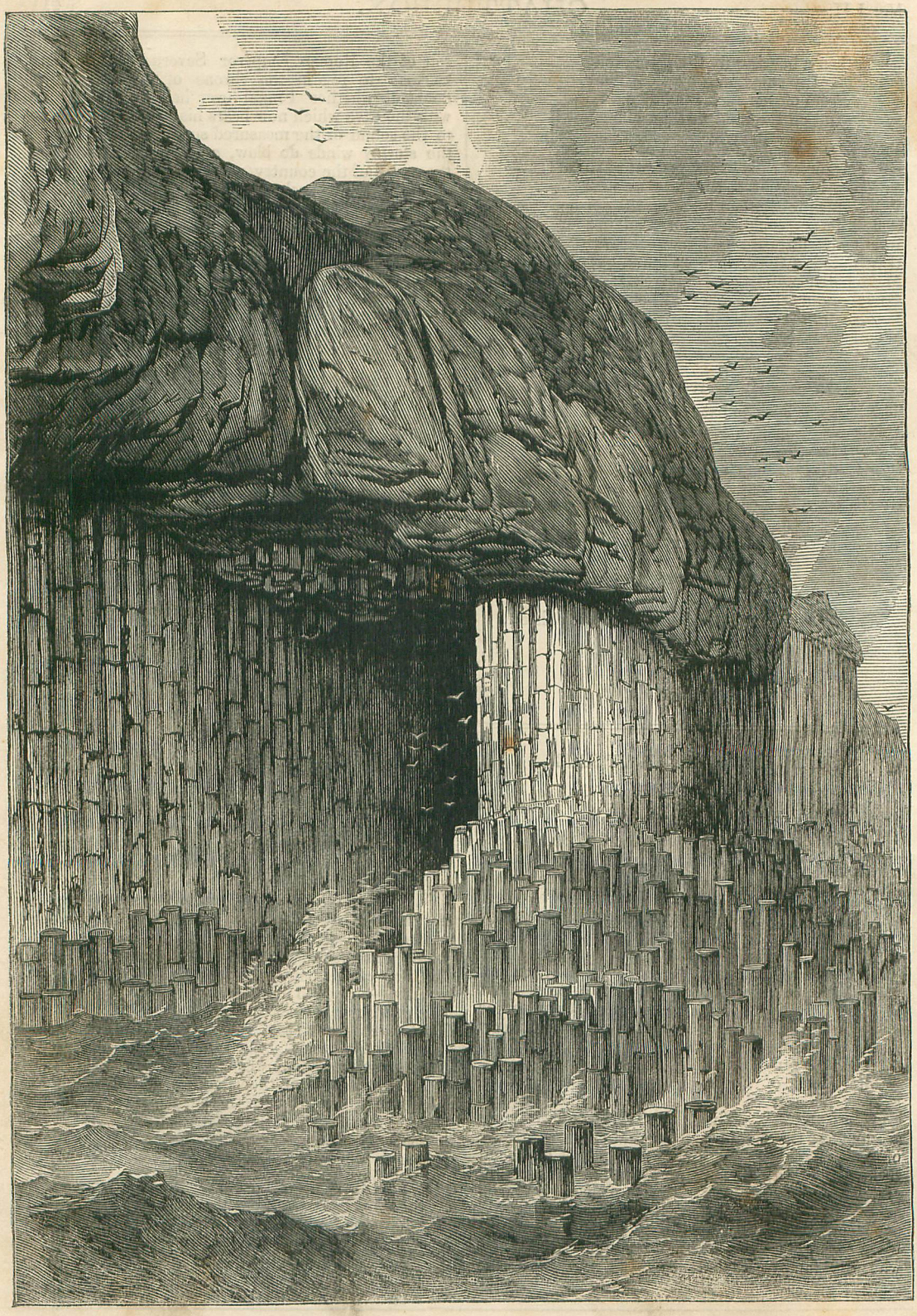
'That man is little to be envied,' says Dr. Johnson, 'whose patriotism would not gain force on the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona.'

What may be the condition of Iona now we do not know; but when the great Dictionary writer visited that island with Boswell he says: 'Iona, which was once the metropolis of learning and piety, has now no school for education, nor temple for worship—only two inhabitants who can speak English, and not one that can write or read.' And the Doctor ventures to say, that 'perhaps, in the revolutions of the world, Iona may be sometime again the instructress of the western regions.'

The sentiments of the islanders agree with this. They are impressed with the expectation that Iona will rise again to her former celebrity. This is probably founded upon some very ancient lines, written, it is said, by Saint Columba himself:—

'In Iona of my heart, Iona of my love,
Instead of the voice of praise shall be lowing of cattle;
But ere the world shall come to an end,
Iona shall be as it was.'

G. S. O.



Fingal's Cave.

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